

Québec adopts Bill 81, amending most of the province's environmental laws

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On May 28, 2025, the Québec government officially adopted Bill 81, *An Act to amend various provisions relating to the environment* (the Act, previously referred to as Bill 81), which was introduced by the province's Minister of the Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change in November 2024.

The amendments contained in the Act address six main themes:

1. Environmental impact assessment and review procedure
 - modification of the environmental impact assessment and review procedure by revising certain of its stages
 - enhancement of the *Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement* (BAPE)'s role in public consultations at the outset of the procedure
 - expanded powers of the Minister over the conduct of the procedure for certain projects
 - addition of a new procedure for sectoral or regional environmental assessments
2. Zero-emission heavy motor vehicles
 - introduction of a zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) standard for heavy motor vehicles
 - addition of powers to enact a regulation specifically for heavy motor vehicles
 - imposition of requirements on manufacturers and adjustments to the ZEV standards for heavy motor vehicles
3. Reconciliation between provincial and municipal regulations
 - introduction of the principle of coexistence of provincial regulations and municipal bylaws relating to the environment
 - replacement of the principle whereby provincial regulations take precedence over municipal bylaws on the same subject matter
4. Activities affecting certain environments
 - clarification of the notion of avoidance of damage to wetlands and bodies of water

- new determination and enforceability of compensation measures for projects affecting certain environments

5. Management of residual materials

- expansion of the extended producer responsibility (EPR) approach to new products or sectors of activity
- addition of powers relating to the marketing, distribution and sale of certain single-use products, including their prohibition
- clarification of certain management powers relating to management organizations and managers of individual recovery and reclamation programs for certain residual materials

6. Environmental control and supervision of activities

- increase in the minimum fines for offences in certain categories of activities
- modification of certain modalities of the ministerial authorization regime
- clarification relating to the recording of data on contaminated soils and residual hazardous materials
- addition of enabling powers concerning the fees associated with certain authorizations and the maintenance of contaminants

The Act came into force on May 28, 2025, with the exception of a few specific provisions.

For more details on the key proposals of Bill 81 adopted in the Act, please see our earlier [Update](#) on the topic.

If you believe that the amendments could have an impact on your business activities in Québec, or if you have any questions about Québec's environmental laws and regulations, please do not hesitate to contact us.