LAW
No. 7664, dated 21.01.1993

ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

On the basis of Article 16 of Law no. 7491, dated April 29, 1991 "On the main constitutional provisions", by proposal of the Council of Ministers,

People’s Assembly
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

DECIDED:

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

Environmental protection constitutes an essential condition for providing for the development of the society and the nation in general, and has these main strategic elements: prevention and reduction of pollution of water, air, ground, and any kind; conservation of biological diversity according to the country’s natural biological background; rational exploitation of natural resources, the avoidance of over exploitation; the ecological restoration of areas damaged by human activities or natural destructive phenomena; preservation of ecological equilibrium; and life quality maintenance and improvement.

Article 2

Within the meaning of this law:

a. "Environment" means all the natural and anthropic elements and factors, in their action and interaction.

The natural environmental elements are represented by water, air, soil and subsoil, solar radiation, vegetable and animal organisms, with all natural processes and phenomena generated by their interaction and which affect life.

Anthropic elements are represented by the existence of human society and its economical and social activity.

b. "Environmental protection" means activity that aims at the prevention of deterioration, regeneration, environmental preservation and improvement.

c. "Environmental pollution" means the change of environmental quality as a result of the creation and insertion of physical, biological, or chemical factors of the natural or human resources, inside or outside the country.
ç) "Environmental impairment" means demolition of the physical chemical and structural features of a natural ecosystem, reduction of biological activity and diversity of natural and human ecosystems, the destruction of ecological equilibrium and life quality, that is caused mainly by the pollution of water, air, soil and catastrophes.

d) "Hazardous substances" are the substances whose production, transport, preservation, use or emission into the environment, as a result of their qualities, damage or can cause damage to human health, environmental qualities, flora, fauna, biocenoses, and biotopes.

dh) "Dangerous residues" are toxic, explosive, inflammable, cancerous, infectious and radioactive residues, having the feature to destroy the natural state of water, ground, and air, with consequences toward human health and natural ecosystems.

e) "Natural legal persons" means enterprises, institution associations, organizations, native and foreign, state or private individuals that perform production, construction, and service activities, and any other activity of an economical or social character which may cause pollution or injury to the environment.

Article 3

Environmental protection from pollution and damage by gaseous, liquid, or solid radioactive substances, and hazardous wastes that are generated or discharged by industrial, agricultural, communal, trade, social, cultural, military, transport activities, or any other type of activities that damages the ecological and natural systems equilibrium or that damages material goods or the cultural or historical values, is compulsory for all state bodies and for physical or juridical persons, native or foreign.

Article 4

Environmental protection from the pollution and damage includes the protection of water ecosystems, atmosphere, soil ecosystems, and protection of nature and landscape.

Detailed rules for protecting water, air, soil, nature, and landscapes are provided by special legal provisions.

Article 4/1

Institutions and physical and juridical persons are obliged to guard and protect the environment. Each person is guaranteed the right to access information on the environment and institutions that specialize in the environment, as well as the right to participate in the decision making process on the environment. The public participation can be achieved by special individuals or through non-governmental organizations engaged in environmental protection.

Each physical and juridical person and state body, in case of environmental threat, pollution, or damage is entitled to notify the competent bodies of environmental protection and any responsible physical or juridical person and demand the interruption of the illegal activity.

Article 5
The importation of hazardous waste or other dangerous matters for the purpose of preserving, depositing, or destroying them in Albania is prohibited.

The transit transport of hazardous waste or any other dangerous matter through the territory or territorial and internal waters of the Republic of Albania is allowed only in cases where it is provided in an International Act in which Albania takes part. In these cases, the transportation will be done at the permission of the Council of Ministers in accordance with the safety rules defined by it.

Article 6

The Republic of Albania applies the principles and norms of international conventions, agreements, and treaties on environment to which it is a party; when the Republic of Albania is not a party it takes into consideration, recognizes, and respect the generally accepted norms and principles of the international environmental law.

CHAPTER II

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Article 7

All the activities of physical and juridical persons, native or foreign, who exercise their activities in the territory of the Republic of Albania, shall be subject to an environmental impact assessment.

Article 8

The environmental impact assessment is done on the basis of:

a) National or local plans and programs about territorial structuring and the urban development plans as well as their amendments.

b) Activities or projects that have important effects on the environment, or those that are particularly dangerous for human health.

c) Projects for reconstruction or enlargement of activities defined under provision "b" of this article.

c) Local projects and activities according to the judgment and definitions of the local government authorities.

Article 9

The National Agency for Environmental Protection in conjunction with its regional agencies is the body in the Republic of Albania competent for demanding the evaluation of effects on the environment.
The above-mentioned body determines which experts or institutions will perform the environmental impact assessments. They are compensated according to the rules defined by the chairman of the National Agency for Environmental Protection.

Article 10

The National Agency for Environmental Protection makes the assessment of the projects and activities that have impacted the environment according to of Article 8 of this Law.

Upon the order of the Chairman of the National Agency for Environmental Protection, the reevaluation of the projects and activities impacting the environment takes place periodically, but not less than once every five years.

Article 11

Rules and procedures for the evaluation of the state of the environment and the effects of activities of physical and juridical persons on it are determined by the Council of Ministers upon proposal of the National Agency for Environmental Protection in cooperation with the ministries and other central institutions in cases when it is deemed necessary.

Article 12

Concerned physical and juridical persons have the right to participate in the process of the consideration of results and environmental impact assessment.

The above shall be informed by national and local mass media or other appropriate means about the procedures of environmental impact assessment, no later than one month prior to its commencement.

Article 13

An environmental impact assessment shall be commissioned by experts or local foreign institutions in the relevant fields, who:

a) Have professional competence.

b) Are independent and have no contractual bonds with the project’s investor or performer as well as with relevant activities.

c) Give conclusions guided by the defined procedure of the environmental impact assessment and admissible norms and standards for environmental pollution.

Article 14

Physical or juridical persons and authors of projects, referred to in Article 8, in order to start the environmental impact assessment shall be obliged to forward documentation comprising:

a) Description of the drafting or activity and project, as well as its site and quantity.
b) Environmental description in relation to the project or activity prior to their implementation.

c) Prognosis of environmental impact.

c) Description of the measures taken to prevent and prohibit the adverse effects on environment.

d) Physical and juridical persons which could be affected by environmental pollution and damage.

dh) Conclusions.

e) Other documents deemed necessary by the National Agency for Environmental Protection.

Article 15

Based on the outcome of evaluations performed on effects on the environment, the competent body according to this law decides on the following measures:

a) Prohibition of the implementation of the project or activity of the physical or juridical persons, as well as the suspension or complete or partial elimination of the activity, if such activity negatively affects the environment.

b) Prohibition of the continuance of the assessment procedure because of environmental impact.

The competent body shall make its decisions known to the parties concerned or, if appropriate, to the public.

Article 16

Assessment expenses when the environmental impact is negative shall be borne by the physical or juridical persons who are responsible for the environmental pollution and damage. The order issued by the relevant competent body for payment of assessment expenses is final.

CHAPTER III

LICENSES FOR ACTIVITIES THAT SHALL AFFECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Article 17

Physical or juridical persons, who engage in economic and social activities that may have an impact on environment, shall be provided licenses by the designated competent bodies under this Law.

Article 18

Licenses shall be provided for the following economic and social activities:
a) Construction and setting into work of various facilities of local and national interest.

b) Local and national programs and plans for territory structuring and urban development as well as their amendments.

c) Construction of roads, railways, seaports, hydro technical plants, other industrial activities, lands reclamation and projects about the improvement of superficial watercourses.

c) Exploration, extraction, and exploitation of natural soil and subsoil resources.

d) Exploitation of mineral and biological resources of waters of fishing interest, taking into account species, periods, means, and admissible levels of fishing.

dh) Changes to the destination of the forest fund, exploitation of common interest forests, construction of forest plantations, and hunting, while taking into consideration zones, species, time periods, means and permitted levels of hunting.

e) Exploitation of flora, fauna, natural resources, coastal zones, and sea bottoms.

ë) Creation of new plantations for growing fruits in zones of protected water resources.

f) Production, sale, and use of toxic products, as well as those for phytosanitarian, agricultural, and syllvicultural uses.

g) The import and export of toxic substances and their transit transport in the territory of the Republic of Albania.

gj) Determining the manner of transportation, the site of deposition, processing and disposal of toxic and hazardous wastes.

h) The import and export of plants and animals considered to damage flora and fauna.

i) Other activities that may have an impact on environment and which shall be determined by the National Agency for Environmental Protection.

Article 19

The following bodies shall provide environmental licenses, referred to in article 18 of this Law:

a) The Council of Ministers, for the activities mentioned in provisions "g" and "gj",

b) The National Agency for Environmental Protection through the regional agencies of the environment in districts, for the activities determined in all other points.

Article 20

Environmental licenses shall be delivered at the request of the physical or juridical person, founded on the technical documentation and study of the analysis of environmental impact presented by him. The license shall be given within three months from the request, and is
valid from the time when the activity starts until the conditions according to which the license
is granted change.

The competent relevant bodies may postpone the time of granting license for up to a six-
month period when the conditions in the first paragraph of this article are not satisfied. These
authorities are obliged to give an answer within the time limit, or else the license shall be
considered approved.

Environmental licenses shall become invalid unless the activity begins within one year from
the time the license is granted. If this schedule is not complied with, a new license can be
required.

Article 21

The competent relevant authorities may reconsider or revoke this license if new and unknown
ecological elements appear at the time the license is granted, or if new legislation on the
environment is passed. In order to reconsider or revoke a license, the National Agency for
Environmental Protection, in cooperation with the ministries and other central bodies, taking
into account the nature of the activity may set up time limits within which the physical or
juridical persons must fulfill the conditions provided for the license.

Article 22

The Council of Ministers, by proposal of the Chairman of the National Environmental
Agency can revoke the licenses of or close down activities that have a negative
environmental impact.

The Chairman of the National Environmental Agency in cooperation with other ministries
and other central institutions, by approval of the Council of Ministers shall define the
activities that have a negative environmental impact, as referred to above.

Article 23

According to the terms designated in the contract, the National Agency of Environmental
Protection does the determination regarding the studies submitted by physical and juridical
persons and analyzes the effects of such studies on the environment for the purpose of
granting environment permission.

Article 24

Economic and social activities of physical and juridical persons referred to in Article 18
under this Law, if performed absent environmental permission, shall be closed down,
prohibited, or interrupted totally or partially by the relevant competent authorities.

The legal and natural persons engaged in the existing activities that do not fulfill the
conditions for the environmental licenses according to the provisions of this Law are bound
to satisfy these conditions within the time limits provided by the CEP in cooperation with
relevant ministries and other main institutions. The existing activities that do not satisfy
conditions for environmental license under the dispositions of this law, depending on the
circumstances, shall be closed down, prohibited, or interrupted totally by the above-mentioned authorities.

The state and local administration bodies provide the respective permission to physical and juridical persons who request to exercise activities that effect the environment only after the environmental permission has been granted by the National Agency of Environmental Protection.

Article 25

The physical and juridical persons who are granted an environmental license shall pay a tax as defined by the Chairman of the National Environmental Agency, which is deposited into the account of the body that grants the license.

The projects and initiatives that take place for the protection of the environment are accomplished by physical and juridical persons who provide help for Albania are exempted from service tariffs for providing environmental permission and able to obtain fiscal benefits. These activities are determined by the National Agency for Environmental Protection expressed periodically.

CHAPTER V

THE REGULATION OF AND INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION

Article 26

Environmental regulation shall consist in the review of natural and human elements and factors of the environment, observation and recording of their alterations, as well as the supervising of the causes of these alterations.

The data gathered, as the result of the control shall serve as a basis for the information on environmental situation, for the reconsideration and revocation of environmental licenses, and for taking other relevant measures defined under this Law.

Article 27

The regulation of the environmental shall be the duty of the Chairman of the National Environmental Agency the National Agency for Environmental Protection and its regional agencies, communes, municipalities or district councils according to the relevant territorial limits.

Regulation shall be continuous in accordance with the observed parameters, sources, and causes of environmental pollution and damage.

Article 28

The Chairman of the National Environmental Agency and Environmental Protection shall determine the special environmental parameters, the parties to be regulated, and the method of regulation.
Article 29

Regulatory control over the sources and causes of environmental pollution and damage shall be exercised:

a) By means of a legal act adopted by the competent bodies defined in article 27 under this law.

b) At the request of physical and juridical persons and citizens affected or that may be affected by environmental pollution and damage, as well as other organization of an environmental character.

Article 30

The expenses of environmental enforcement and regulation, when environmental pollution or damage is verified, shall be borne by the physical or juridical person responsible for the pollution and damage. The order issued by the relevant competent authority, with respect to enforcement and regulation expenses, shall be final.

Article 31

The competent agency with authority over the environmental situation shall decide depending on the circumstances, to close down, prohibit, or interrupt totally or partially an activity of physical or juridical persons who have caused environmental pollution or damage, defining also the respective duties to improve the situation.

Article 32

Information on the environmental situation shall consist of:

a. Data about the condition of environment.

b. Data about the results of actions causing or likely to cause pollution or impairment to the environment, its elements and factors.

c) Data about the activities undertaken for the purpose of environmental protection.

ç) Data about the statement and the exploitation of biological and mineral sources.

The information shall be accompanied by explanations about possible adverse consequences of a delayed action on environment and human health and by recommendation about the actions to be taken by the citizens in the event of expected adverse effects.

Article 33

The information on the environmental situation shall be received and stored by the Minister of Health, the National Agency of Environmental Protection and its regional agencies, ministries and institutions, and by communes, municipalities, or districts according to the relevant territorial limits.
The physical and juridical persons shall be obliged to forward information on the environmental situation within 2 weeks from the date the request is received. The information must be presented to the competent bodies according to procedures defined by the Chairman of the National Environmental Agency.

Article 34

The authorities referred to in Article 33 of this Law shall publicize information that contains data on the change of environmental situation to the mass media or by any other means, in a form accessible to the citizens.

Confidential information defined in special dispositions, shall be presented in writing without the right of dissemination.

Article 35

Immediately after causing pollution and damage to environment the relevant state bodies, referred to in Article 33, as well as the physical or juridical persons shall inform the population about the occurrence of the environmentally adverse alterations, the measures taken to reduce or limit it, and about the appropriate conduct of the citizens concerning health protection and their security.

Article 36

Physical and juridical persons shall inform their buyers or customers during the time of sale or performance of service, in writing or orally, about these components of goods and services which are dangerous and about the possible adverse effects and impacts on environment and human health.

CHAPTER V

DUTIES AND RIGHTS OF CENTRAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON ENVIRONMENT

Article 37

The Chairman of the National Environmental Agency implements and develops the policy of the Government in the environmental field for the purpose of obtaining a sustainable economical and social development and life quality maintenance and improvement. This policy is implemented through the National Agency of Environmental Protection.

Article 38

The Chairman of the National Environmental Agency shall have the following main competencies in the environmental field:

a) Presents to the Council of Ministers the strategy in the field of environmental protection; coordinates the supervisory functions of the ministries, as well as other central and local power institutions within the environmental field.
b) Prepares a report on the state of the environment every two years and presents it to the Council of Ministers for review.

c) Processes the main directions and define priorities in the investments to protect the environment, which are consistent with the economical and social development and the real possibilities of the country

c) Determines and distribute funds for scientific research project and study programs for the purpose of taking important measures to protect the environment, utilize purely ecological technologies, obtain apparatuses and train of experts in the country or abroad.

d) Represents Albania in international activities, and in intergovernmental and interstate organizations in the field of environmental protection.

Article 39

The National Agency for Environmental Protection is the specialized body in the environmental field dependant on the Council of Ministers. Its structure is approved by the Council of Ministers, upon the proposal of the chairman of the National Agency for Environmental Protection.

The National Agency has its regional agencies that are dependent on it. The duties and rights of these agencies are approved by the Chairman of the National Agency for Environmental protection.

Article 40

The National Agency of Environmental Protection shall have the following main rights and duties:

a) It shall pursue the implementation of the laws and acts of Council of Ministers, about the environmental protection issues and forward to the highest bodies various studies and proposals on the organization, management, and solution of environmental protection issues.

b) It shall assist and control the ministries, other central institutions, local authorities, and physical or juridical persons for the work they shall do when applying regulations on environmental protection.

c) It shall prepare the draft agreements, conventions, protocols, projects, and programs that shall be realized in the framework of the bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the relevant bodies of other states and international organizations of environmental protection, and follow up implementation when finished.

c) In cooperation with ministries and other central institutions and local authorities, it shall organize monitoring of pollution for the purpose of determining the environmental situation and on the basis of the data of industrial, urban, agricultural pollution levels, and other hazardous chemical-toxic and radioactive substances it shall propose concrete measures for the protection of the purity of air, water, soil, and genetic fund of the country.
d) It shall study the needs of the country for specialists and coordinate the qualification and specialization of experts in the environmental protection field.

dh) It shall promote education and public participation in activities fostering environmental protection, especially in the understanding of the state of the environment, the drafting of the programs and environment plans, and the performance of the duties of the central and local bodies for the protection of the environment.

e) It shall manage and distribute environmental funds created according to this Law and funds for investments provided by the state budget for the environment.

č) It shall, in cooperation with other interested institutions:

   o approve the permitted limits of pollution in forms of gas, liquid, solid, or radioactive substances to be unloaded in water, air, or ground, as well the permitted limits of dangerous and toxic substances contained in dangerous wastes and substances, based on the directives of European Union.
   o approve rules for the gathering, guarding, transportation, and systems of wastes and dangerous substances, agents of pollution, as well as the use of the natural rejuvenating or non rejuvenating sources;
   o approve the list of substances containing waste or dangerous substances.

f) It shall approve regulations, instructions, and managerial plans for all the categories of the protected zones in cooperation with the ministries and the other interested institutions.

Article 41

The Inspectorate of Environmental Protection is organized and reports to the National Agency for Environmental Protection. It shall consist of the chief inspector and other inspectors of the Agency as well as the inspectors of the regional agencies. The prime inspector for environmental protection is the chairman of the National Agency for Environmental Protection.

The Chairman of the National Environmental Agency shall define the duties, rights, and competencies of the Inspectorate of Environmental Protection.

The Inspectorate of Environmental Protection shall complete its duties according to this Law with the cooperation of other inspectorates and police bodies.

Inspectors of the regional environmental agencies of each prefecture are the members of the territory regulating councils of the respective districts of the prefecture. The chairman of the National Agency appoints the inspectors for Environmental Protection. The chairman of the National Agency for Environment Protection is member of the Regulating Territory Council of the Republic of Albania.

Article 42

The councils of communes, municipalities, districts, and the respective administrative units shall have the following rights and duties.
a) They shall pursue the implementation of laws and acts of Council of Ministers regarding environmental protection issues.

b) They shall take measures and secure environmental protection and regeneration.

c) They shall compile and publish their programs and other measures for environmental protection in coordination with the competent specialized authorities.

c) They shall inform the population of the environmental situation and the other local activities, subject to environmental impact assessments.

d) They shall exercise control over the environment under the provisions of this law.

dh) They shall manage and distribute local environmental funds created according to this Law.

   a. They shall define the sites of disposal and processing of industrial and human wastes so that they do not pose a risk to the environment.

CHAPTER VI

RESPONSIBILITIES AND SANCTIONS

Article 43

Physical and juridical persons who cause damages to natural resources that result in environmental pollution and impairment shall be compelled to pay compensation for the resulting damages.

Impaired physical or juridical persons may present claims for damage compensation to the court.

Article 44

Compensation for damage resulting from environmental trans-boundary pollution and impairment shall be arranged for in accordance with the international agreements, conventions, treaties, to which the Republic of Albania is a party, or in case it is a non party, it shall be arranged in a manner that is consistent with generally accepted principles and norms of international environmental law.

Article 45

Infringements of this Law, when they do not constitute criminal offenses, shall constitute administrative violations in the environmental field. Examples include:

   a) Transportation of the hazardous waste and substances without license through the territory land and the territorial waters of the Republic of Albania.

   b) Importation of hazardous wastes and substances for the purpose of conservation, storage, or disposal.
c) Violation of insurance rules defined by the Minister of Health and Environmental transporting hazardous wastes and substances.

c) Failure to send, when due, data on the environmental situation.

d) Failure to include information on environmental situation that includes recommendations about the manner of action by a citizen when adverse consequences to the environment are anticipated.

dh) Failure of physical or juridical persons to inform the citizens about environmental pollution and damage caused by them, the measures taken for its control or elimination, and the course of action taken.

e) Failure to provide buyer and customers with relevant information about hazardous goods and services and their possible adverse effects or impacts.

è) Objection to or failure of physical or juridical persons to perform environmental impact assessments.

f) Failure to provide designated documents to the proper authorities for the purpose of environment impact assessment.

g) Violation of the procedure of environmental impact assessment by experts.

gj) Engaging in economical and social activities that may affect the environment, without a relevant license from the competent state authority.

h) Violation of rules and guidelines determined by the Chairman of the National Environmental Agency for specially endangered environmental zones.

    a. Violation of admissible limits of pollutant substances defined by National Environmental Agency.

j) Violation of regulations for the storage, transport, deposit, conservation, and disposal of hazardous wastes and substances as defined by the National Agency of Environmental Protection.

Article 46

Physical persons who perform administrative violations contrary to article 45 of this law are subject to a fine ranging from 3 000 to 500 000 lek, while juridical persons are subject to a fine ranging from 10 000 to 10 000 000 lek. In addition to the fine, either seizure of the conveyances causing pollution and damage to the environment or removal of the environment permission can be decided. In cases of objection regarding the above measures, the environment inspectorate cooperates with the relevant forces of the Public Order.

For foreign physical and juridical persons that conduct their activity in the territory of the Republic of Albania, the fine may be paid in foreign currency in the above measure, converted by the official rate notified by the Bank of Albania at the day of the ascertainment of the violation.
Article 47

The right to fix fines for administrative violations belongs to the authorized persons of the National Agency for Environmental Protection and its regional agencies, according to the authorization provided by its chairman, as well as to the inspectors of the National Agency for Environmental Protection and its regional agencies.

This decision can be appealed to the chairman of the National Agency for Environmental Protection within 10 days from the date of the declaration of the decision or its notification. The chairman of the National Agency for Environmental Protection must respond to the appeal within 30 days from its depositing.

Within 5 days, an appeal can be lodged against a decision of the chairman of the National Agency for Environmental Protection, or in cases where the chairman does not respond within the 30-day term, to the district court where the violation has been performed.

Article 48

The fines issued for administrative violations according to this law are deposited in the bank in the account identified by the National Agency for Environmental Protection and are liquidated within 30 days after the decision is in a final form. For each day of delay after the completion of this term, and for a period of 30 days, the wrongdoer is obliged to pay, in addition to the fine, a sum equal to 10 percent of this fine.

Upon completion of the above-mentioned time periods, the payment of the fine becomes compulsory according to the law on the administrative violations.

Article 49

Physical and juridical persons may make objections and complaints about the closing down, prohibition, or total or partial interruption of their activities by the authorized competent bodies under article 15, 24, and 31 of this Law, to the Court within 15 days from the date of the injunction.

CHAPTER VIII

FINAL DISPOSITIONS

Article 50

The income from taxes and fines that are generated under this Law shall be paid into the account of the relevant bodies for the purpose of creating funds for the environment.

Environmental funds shall be used as a financial support for the following activities:

a) Taking of measures in the elimination of pollution resources.

b) Designing projects and taking rehabilitative measures in ecologically damaged zones.
c) Scientific research, performance of studies, and specialist training.

c) Providing the necessary means and supplies to the personnel and offices.

d) Reimbursement for the environmental experts and respective institutions that make the environmental impact assessment.

dh) To pay administrative expenses related to environmental impact assessments, monitory programs, and other programs of this kind.

Article 51

The environmental protection employees in accomplishing their duties according to this Law cooperate with the police for public order and the forestry police, according to a special guidelines approved by the Chairman of the National Environmental Agency, the Minister of Public Order, and the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Article 52

Specific rules and regulations regarding the implementation of this Law are provided by the Council of Ministers.

Article 53


Article 54

This Law comes into power after publication in the Fletorja Zyrtare."

Declared upon decree no. 447, dated 2.2.1993 of the President of the Republic of Albania, Sali Berisha.