



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF QUÉBEC

SECOND SESSION

FORTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE

Bill 497

An Act to ensure air quality

Introduction

**Introduced by
Mr. Joël Arseneau
Member for Îles-de-la-Madeleine**

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

The purpose of this bill is to ensure air quality in all regions of Québec and to see to the protection of persons by promoting access to information and to the tools necessary to prevent the risks associated with poor air quality.

For that purpose, the bill establishes a national air quality strategy.

The goals of the national strategy are to promote, with a view to transparency and public health, the dissemination of information on air quality, to ensure compliance with the highest recognized air quality standards and to implement measures for mitigating and preventing the impacts of air pollutants on health.

In order to achieve the goals of the national strategy, the actions must be aimed at, in particular, improving air quality standards to follow the recommendations of the World Health Organization, equipping health professionals so that they can give advice adapted to the vulnerability profiles of their clientele, increasing the number of measurement instruments used to monitor air quality and increasing urban greening.

The bill also provides for the adoption of a five-year action plan to ensure the implementation of the national air quality strategy.

Lastly, the bill includes transitional and final provisions.

Bill 497

AN ACT TO ENSURE AIR QUALITY

THE PARLIAMENT OF QUÉBEC ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

CHAPTER I

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this Act is to ensure air quality in all regions of Québec and to see to the protection of persons by promoting access to information and to the tools necessary to prevent the risks associated with poor air quality.

For that purpose, this Act establishes a national air quality strategy.

CHAPTER II

NATIONAL AIR QUALITY STRATEGY

2. A national air quality strategy is established under this Act.

3. The national strategy consists of a set of actions implemented by the Government, municipalities, enterprises and other social stakeholders to ensure a high level of air quality and to reduce the health impacts of air pollutants.

4. The goals of the national strategy are the following:

(1) to promote, with a view to transparency and public health, the dissemination of information on air quality;

(2) to ensure compliance at all times with the highest recognized air quality standards; and

(3) to implement measures for mitigating and preventing the impacts of air pollutants on health.

5. In order to achieve the goals of the national strategy, the actions must be aimed at, in particular,

(1) updating air quality standards on an ongoing basis to follow the recommendations of the World Health Organization;

(2) informing the population using an air quality index based on a quantitative approach that allows the population to be apprised, in real time, of air contaminant concentration levels and to compare them with the levels considered harmful;

(3) identifying situations which could pose a threat to the population's health and putting in place the measures necessary for protecting its health;

(4) informing the population about the consequences of air pollution on health and the means of protecting itself;

(5) equipping health professionals so that they can give advice adapted to the vulnerability profiles of their clientele;

(6) increasing the number of measurement instruments used to monitor air quality and updating practices according to the latest available technologies;

(7) increasing urban greening and establishing the zones that pose a health risk, such as the sides of roads with high traffic flow, in order to regulate the construction of residences, offices, schools, childcare centres, hospital centres, seniors' residences or parks;

(8) including direct and indirect health costs in the economic evaluation of any project that could emit significant amounts of air contaminants;

(9) setting national and regional objectives for air quality and air contaminant emissions reduction; and

(10) implementing measures to monitor enterprises that present a risk of non-compliance with the standards provided for in paragraph 1.

CHAPTER III

GOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN

6. To ensure that the national air quality strategy is implemented, the Government must adopt a five-year action plan specifying the activities it intends to carry out to achieve the objectives pursued.

7. The Government must, within the framework of the action plan, set targets to be reached, in particular in relation to the dissemination of information on air quality and the installation of measurement instruments for that purpose.

8. The action plan must provide for a program to coordinate the implementation of measures for facilitating the achievement of the air contaminant reduction objectives. That program must, in particular, contribute to the mobilization of the stakeholders who could help achieve those objectives.

9. The Minister must submit to the Government, not later than one year before the end of each five-year period, a report on the activities carried out within the framework of the action plan. The Minister may, for that purpose, request from the other ministers concerned specific reports concerning the activities carried out in their fields of competence. The Minister must make the report public within 60 days after submitting it to the Government.

CHAPTER IV

AMENDING PROVISION

ACT TO AMEND THE ENVIRONMENT QUALITY ACT TO MODERNIZE THE ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORIZATION SCHEME AND TO AMEND OTHER LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS, IN PARTICULAR TO REFORM THE GOVERNANCE OF THE GREEN FUND

10. Section 310 of the Act to amend the Environment Quality Act to modernize the environmental authorization scheme and to amend other legislative provisions, in particular to reform the governance of the Green Fund (2017, chapter 4) is amended by replacing “which comes into force on the date set by the Government” in paragraph 2 by “which comes into force on *(insert the date that is six months after the date of assent to this Act)*”.

CHAPTER V

TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

11. The Government must, before *(insert the date that is 18 months after the date of assent to this Act)*, adopt and make public its first five-year action plan to implement the national air quality strategy.

12. The Minister may enter into an agreement with the government of another competent authority or with one of its bodies concerning the implementation of this Act.

13. The Minister of the Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks is responsible for the administration of this Act.

14. This Act comes into force on *(insert the date of assent to this Act)*.

