

newspaper published in one or more counties, and in more than one weekly newspaper of general circulation in one or more counties, which the Department determines may directly be affected by the proposed activity. In any county that does not have a daily newspaper, the publication required under this subsection is satisfied by publishing a notice for 2 successive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in that county. At the public hearing, the applicant and any interested person shall be given an opportunity to present facts, evidence, and arguments for or against granting the application. If a contested case hearing is requested specifically, the hearing shall be conducted to comply with the contested case provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act.]

[(c) If a State political subdivision, acting within its authority and responsibility, holds, or is required to hold, public hearings on matters subject to any permit the Department issues under this section, the State political subdivision and the Department may hold a joint hearing. However, interested units and the public shall be notified that it is also a Department hearing for the purpose of obtaining a Department permit. At a joint public hearing, the applicant and any interested person shall be given an opportunity to present facts, evidence, and arguments for or against granting the application.]

(A) IT IS STATE POLICY THAT:

(1) THE PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS TO ISSUE OR MODIFY PERMITS UNDER THIS SUBTITLE WILL BE EXPEDITIOUS;

(2) ANY PERSON WHO IS INTERESTED IN A PENDING APPLICATION FOR ISSUANCE OR MODIFICATION OF A PERMIT UNDER THIS SUBTITLE WILL BE ABLE TO:

(I) OBTAIN READILY FROM THE DEPARTMENT INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICATION AND ~~TO~~;

(II) OFFER TO THE DEPARTMENT INFORMATION AND COMMENTS ABOUT THE APPLICATION; AND

(III) REQUEST AND BE GRANTED A PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION;

(3) ANY PERSON WHO IS SPECIFICALLY AGGRIEVED BY THE DEPARTMENT'S DECISION TO ISSUE, MODIFY, OR DENY A PERMIT UNDER THIS SUBTITLE WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADJUDICATE FACTUAL AND LEGAL ISSUES IN A CONTESTED CASE HEARING UNDER TITLE 10 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.

(B) (1) AN APPLICANT FOR A NEW OR MODIFIED PERMIT UNDER THIS SUBTITLE SHALL ASCERTAIN THE NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF ALL CURRENT OWNERS OF PROPERTIES--THAT-HAVE-A-COMMON-BOUNDARY-WITH