

# PARLIAMENT QUESTION: Changes in Environmental Clearances Policy

Posted On: 03 FEB 2025 3:40PM by PIB Delhi

The Central Government has amended Section 21 of Air (Prevention and control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and Section 25 of Water (Prevention and control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and exempted certain categories of industries from obtaining consents. Consequently, notifications [G. S. R. 702 (E) dated 12-11-2024 under section 21(1) of the Air Act and G. S. R. 703 (E) dated 12-11-2024 under section 25(1) of the Water Act] have been issued to exempt white category of industries completely from consent mechanism and other categories from Consent to Establish if the project or activity has obtained environmental clearance under the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986. In view of the above, the project / activities requiring prior EC as per the Environmental Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 (as amended from time to time) under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 are exempted from obtaining previous Consent To Establish (CTE) separately.

Subsequently, the Ministry has issued a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) dated 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024, which has been partially modified vide OM dated 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025, for implementing the notifications mentioned above. In the SOP, it has been, inter-alia, directed that, for the projects / activities requiring prior EC, the exemption provided from obtaining CTE is subject to obtaining necessary EC and the environmental safeguards related to the establishment of industries, as may be required, will be integrated in the conditions of EC itself. The above-mentioned OMs provide for seeking the comments of the respective SPCBs on the project site, the feasibility of the project and the environmental safeguards for the concerned project, which will be integrated in the conditions of EC. Further provision for payment of requisite fees to the SPCBs has also been made.

The Ministry has undertaken systemic and policy reforms to streamline and expedite the Environment Clearance process by taking into account the imperative need for development while balancing the same with due environmental safeguards in line with the concept of sustainable development. This exemption will not only reduce compliance burden on industries but also promote Ease of Doing Business by reducing duplication of approvals since the criteria for environmental clearance and consent were overlapping.

Exempting certain categories of industries will not have any adverse impacts on environment, since the above notification effectively integrates the two procedures. As mentioned above, the SPCBs will have opportunity to put forth their comments/conditions during environmental appraisal process, which will be included in the EC conditions. Also, the existing mechanism of 'Consent to Operate' will continue as such and the SPCBs will continue to regulate and monitor the potential environmental implications by projects through the mechanism of Consent to Operate.

This information was provided by UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE, SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH, in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha today.

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*(Lok Sabha US Q50)*

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