



Dated the 15th June, 2026

EPA/SEC/O/260615/0065

ORDER

501/PA/DG/EPA/2026

**ORDER FOR CONDUCT OF PUBLIC HEARINGS THROUGH HYBRID MODE UNDER
SECTION 12 OF THE PUNJAB ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1997**

WHEREAS, the Punjab Environmental Protection Act, 1997 has been enacted to provide for the protection, conservation, rehabilitation and improvement of the environment, the prevention and control of pollution, and the promotion of sustainable development in the Province of Punjab;

2. **AND WHEREAS**, sustainable development requires that development activities be planned and implemented in an environmentally sound manner, ensuring due consideration of potential environmental impacts and providing opportunities for affected communities, stakeholders and the general public to participate in environmental decision-making processes;

3. **AND WHEREAS**, Section 12 of the Punjab Environmental Protection Act, 1997 requires proponents of projects likely to cause adverse environmental effects to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report and obtain prior environmental approval from the Punjab Environmental Protection Agency before commencement of construction or operation;

4. **AND WHEREAS**, Section 12(3) of the Punjab Environmental Protection Act, 1997 mandates that the Punjab Environmental Protection Agency shall hold a public hearing and solicit comments from the public during the review of an Environmental Impact Assessment before granting or refusing environmental approval;

5. **AND WHEREAS**, Regulation 9 of the Punjab Environmental Protection (Review of Initial Environmental Examination and Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2022 provides mechanism of such public participation, being a fundamental element of environmental decision-making that promotes transparency, accountability and informed assessment of environmental impacts. In order to facilitate broader stakeholder engagement and enhance accessibility, it is necessary to provide a mechanism for conducting public hearings through hybrid mode i.e., physical/in person as well as online manner;

6. **AND WHEREAS**, although the EPA Punjab e-Library established vide order No. **451/PA to DG/EPA/2026 dated 28.01.2026** provides access to EIA reports and Public Hearing information, it is necessary to prescribe a structured mechanism for

effective public participation, submission of comments and online engagement in Public Hearings conducted under Section 12 of the Punjab Environmental Protection Act, 1997;

7. **AND WHEREAS**, under Section 5(4) of the Punjab Environmental Protection Act, 1997, the powers and functions of the Environmental Protection Agency vest in and are exercised by its Director General;

8. **NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Dr. Imran Hamid Sheikh (PAS), Director General, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Punjab, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me under Section 12 read with Section 5(4) of the Punjab Environmental Protection Act, 1997, do hereby order that, henceforth, all the public hearings mandated under Section 12(3) of the Act *ibid* shall be held through hybrid mode i.e., physical/in person as well as online manner. The online participation shall be observed in the following way:

- i. Every Public Hearing Notice shall provide the website address from where the relevant Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report may be accessed, downloaded and reviewed, along with the mechanism for submission of comments and queries.
 - ii. Every Public Hearing Notice shall include the online meeting link, meeting ID and other relevant access details for online participation on the specified date and time. In addition, the said notice will also contain the instruction for online participants regarding submission of their comments through e-library of EPA Punjab.
 - iii. Members of the public, affected communities, stakeholders, experts and other interested persons may participate in the Public Hearing either physically/ in person or through the designated online platform.
 - iv. The Project Proponent shall ensure the availability of adequate internet connectivity, audio-visual equipment, sound system and recording facilities necessary for the conduct and recording of the hybrid Public Hearing.
 - v. Upon conclusion of the Public Hearing, the Project Proponent shall provide complete audio-video recordings of the proceedings in two (02) USB drives or external storage devices, as the case may be, to the EPA representative present at the venue.
 - vi. The Concerned District In-charge (Env) shall send one such USB drive or external storage device, as the case may be, to EPA Headquarters for consideration of scrutiny/ review officers as well as placing the same in library for record keeping.
9. This order shall come into force with immediate effect and shall remain in force until modified or withdrawn.

(DR. IMRAN HAMID SHEIKH)
DIRECTOR GENERAL
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

C.C.

A copy is forwarded for information and necessary action to the:-

- 1) Secretary
Environment Protection and Climate Change Department
- 2) Secretary
Industries, Commerce & Investment Department
- 3) Chief of Staff to CS Punjab
Chief Secretary Office
- 4) Member , (Environment and Climate Change Wing)
P&D Board
- 5) Director , (Monitoring Laboratory and Implementation)
Environmental Protection Agency
- 6) Director , (Planning and Coordination)
Environmental Protection Agency
- 7) Director Admin , (Administration and Monitoring)
Environmental Protection Agency
- 8) Director , (Multilateral Environmental Agreement)
Environmental Protection Agency
- 9) Director EIA , (Environmental Impact Assessment)
Environmental Protection Agency
- 10) Director , (Legal)
Environmental Protection Agency
- 11) Director , (Environmental Health, Dengue, Hospital and Hazardous Waste (EDH))
Environmental Protection Agency
- 12) Director , (Environmental Monitoring Center)
Environmental Protection Agency
- 13) **PSO to Minister for Environment, Forest and P&D Board, Punjab**
- 14) **All the District In-charges (DDs/ADs) (Field / Lab), EPA Punjab**
- 15) Deputy Director , (SAW)
Environmental Protection Agency
- 16) Coordinator , (CKENPD)
Environmental Protection Agency
- 17) Incharge IT Support , (Unit)
Environmental Protection Agency
- 18) Assistant Director (Public Relation Officer) , (Public Relation Officer)

Environmental Protection Agency

- 19) librarian , (EPA)
Environmental Protection Agency
- 20) Personal Assistant , (PA To DG)
Environmental Protection Agency



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