

Report of the Committee

The Sectoral Oversight Committee on Environment, Agriculture and Resource Sustainability, which met in Parliament on 09th June 2026, considered the following Bill:

- National Environmental (Amendment) Bill

(Presented to Parliament on 06th May 2026 and referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Environment, Agriculture and Resource Sustainability.)

Committee Members Present:

Hon. Hector Appuhamy, M.P., (Chair)
Hon. Gnanamuttu Srineshan, M.P.
Hon. Kins Nelson, M.P.
Hon. Upul Kithsiri, M.P.
Hon. (Mrs.) M.A.C.S. Chathuri Gangani, M.P.
Hon. Susantha Kumara Nawarathna, M.P.
Hon. Chithral Fernando, Attorney at Law, M.P.
Hon. Sudath Balagalla, M.P.
Hon. Kitnan Selvaraj, M.P.
Hon. Bhagya Sri Herath, Attorney at Law, M.P.

Non-Committee Members Present:

Hon. Ajith Gihan, M.P.

Secretary of the Committee

Mr. Kalansooriya Priyantha Chandana, Assistant Director (Administration)

Officials in Attendance

Ministry of Environment

Mr. R. P. S. U. Jayarathne, Additional Secretary (Admin.)
Mrs. R. H. M. P. Abeykoon, Additional Secretary (Environment Policy Planning)
Ms. Dineshika C. Jayawardane, Legal Officer
Mrs. Krishanthi Hennayake, Assistant Director - Legal

Central Environmental Authority

Prof. Thilak Hewawasam, Chairman
Mr. R. S. P. Kapila Rajapaksha, Director General
Mrs. G. R. D. N. Attanayake, Deputy Director General
Mr. H. L. Kamal Priyantha, Deputy Director General
Mr. S. M. A. Senanayake, Deputy Director General
Mrs. S. P. Periyapperuma, Deputy Director General

Attorney General's Department

Dr. (Mrs.) Avanthi Perera, Deputy Solicitor General

Legal Draftsman's Department

Mrs. M. P. Kularathna, Assistant Legal Draftsman

Introduction

Bill to provide for the establishment of a Central Environmental Authority, for the powers, functions and duties of the said Authority, for the protection and the management of environment, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto and for the repeal of the National Environmental Act, No. 47 of 1980 amended by Acts No. 56 of 1988 and No. 53 of 2000.

Observations of the Committee

1. That the number of members of the Board of Directors of the CEA will be increased from three (03) to five (05), considering the vital role played by the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) in Sri Lanka and the importance of having members with expertise in various fields when making decisions;
2. That although the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) has adopted the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) methodology, the relevant legal provisions will be provided through these amendments;
3. That until now, the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) has had only the authority to issue recommendations on environmental protection, and through these amendments, it will be granted the authority to issue orders;
4. That until now, the responsibility for the management of waste generated through the production of goods did not rest with the producer, and the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) is vested with the authority to implement a mechanism for assigning such responsibility;
5. That the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) is vested with the authority to institute legal proceedings in cases where the local authorities do not take action to regulate environmental issues within their respective areas and where orders issued by the CEA are neglected;
6. That the amendments include a provision requiring the Environmental Site Clearance Certificate to be obtained prior to the commencement of an industry, instead of obtaining an Environmental Protection License (EPL) after the establishment of the industry;
7. That the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) should be vested with the authority to issue the Environmental Protection Licenses for industries and to cancel such licenses;
8. That new legal provisions regarding chemical substances and harmful waste management have been included, and the establishment of an expert technical committee for the said purpose is considered timely; and
9. That the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) has been granted the authority to request written reports, and to demolish and remove unauthorized constructions located within environmentally protected areas.

Accordingly, the Committee approved the National Environmental (Amendment) Bill, subject to the approval of Attorney General for the Committee Stage amendments to be submitted by the Ministry.

Decisions of the Committee

The National Environmental (Amendment) Bill was considered and agreed upon in the Committee, and it was resolved that this report of the Committee prepared thereon be presented to Parliament on Friday, 12 June, 2026 by Hon. Hector Appuhamy, M.P., Chair of the Committee.