

Research and Reflections on Local Material Reserve Legislation

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Abstract: Laws, administrative regulations and departmental rules have laid a solid foundation for local material reserve legislation. Academic research on the current situation, existing problems and countermeasures of material reserve management has pointed out the key issues to be solved in legislation. Jiangsu Province has a wide variety of material reserves and remarkable basic advantages in promoting the construction of a provincial material reserve system. However, problems such as fragmented management, insufficient deployment efficiency and low reserve safety are prominent in practice. Local material reserve legislation should clarify the management system, improve operational mechanisms, enhance deployment efficiency, strengthen digital construction, standardize daily management and ensure reserve safety, so as to advance the legalization of material reserve management.

Keywords: Rationalize system; Improve mechanism; Standardized management; Reserve safety

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1. Introduction

General Secretary Xi stressed that China, as a major country, must possess national reserve strength and emergency response capabilities commensurate with its status. The Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China explicitly called for accelerating the improvement of the national reserve system^[1]. To implement the decisions and arrangements of the Party Central Committee, regulate provincial material reserve activities, improve the reserve safety guarantee system, enhance risk prevention and emergency response capabilities, and realize the positive interaction between high-quality economic and social development and high-level security, the Jiangsu Provincial Government has included the “Measures for the Administration of Material Reserves in Jiangsu Province” in its 2025 legislative work plan. In response to new situations and problems, it is necessary to build a unified and long-term mechanism for provincial material reserves at the institutional level. Based on theoretical and empirical analysis of practical problems and difficulties in local material reserves, this paper examines the current legal system and explores the significance of local comprehensive material reserve legislation.

2. Current situation of the material reserve management system and research review

2.1. Current system of material reserve management

First, laws and administrative regulations set general requirements for material reserve management. The “Emergency Response Law, Food Security Law, Regulations on Natural Disaster Relief, Regulations on the Administration of Central Grain Reserves” and other normative documents require local authorities to establish and improve emergency material reserve systems, providing a superior legal basis for local legislation.

Second, specialized material reserve management systems have been improved at the national and local levels. At the national level, measures for central reserve sugar, emergency rescue materials and other special reserves provide a basis for classified management. In Jiangsu, rules and documents on seed reserves, government grain reserves and forest fire-fighting materials have been formulated, laying a foundation for comprehensive management measures.

Third, it is urgent to develop comprehensive regulations. Current local material reserves are mainly governed by administrative normative documents, which are fragmented, low-level and unsystematic, failing to meet the needs of law-based governance. Provincial legislation is urgently needed to build a local material reserve security system.

2.2. Research review on material reserve management

Scholars and practitioners have conducted extensive research on current problems and solutions. Major problems include: lack of unified allocation and information-sharing mechanisms, insufficient policy support for peacetime-to-emergency conversion, scattered management subjects, unclear reserve inventories, weak disaster response capacity, inadequate systems, shortage of professionals, insufficient overall planning, weak infrastructure, low allocation capacity and low intelligence^[2].

Corresponding suggestions are put forward: build a unified and efficient management system; scientifically determine categories and scales to realize “large-scale reserves”; adopt diversified reserve modes with contractual reserves supplementing physical reserves; optimize reserve layout and build a reserve network; establish a unified command mechanism and coordinate departments; build an efficient emergency distribution system; standardize the whole process of procurement, storage, management, allocation, transportation, recycling and scrappage; strengthen personnel training and improve intelligent management.

3. Practice and review of material reserve management in Jiangsu Province

3.1. Current system and mechanism of material reserve management in Jiangsu

Jiangsu has a wide range of government reserve materials, divided into general and special materials. General materials are widely used, including disaster relief and medical protection supplies. Special materials are professional and scenario-specific, including police, flood control, forest fire prevention, civil air defense, nuclear emergency and earthquake emergency equipment.

At the provincial level, the Jiangsu Provincial Bureau of Grain and Material Reserves is responsible for general materials, grain, edible oil, pork, cotton, sugar and strategic materials such as petroleum and natural gas. Departments of public security, water resources, forestry and industry and information technology manage special materials respectively. Prefectural and county-level systems basically follow the provincial model.

Provincial reserves cover five categories and 28 subcategories: means of subsistence, emergency relief, means of production, energy and military-civilian integration. A multi-level, linked and coordinated pattern has taken initial shape. A provincial reserve network covering 13 prefecture-level cities has been built, with 13 cities and 50 counties (districts) storing more than 200 kinds of disaster relief and emergency rescue supplies, forming a vertically connected and horizontally supported “province-city-county” reserve network^[3].

3.2. Prominent problems in the construction of Jiangsu's material reserve system

Compared to build a unified reserve system with clear responsibilities, standardized operation, effective supervision, and strong support, there are still gaps:

First, the unified and efficient management system needs improvement. Decentralized storage and overlapping authorities lead to poor coordination in demand formulation, reserve implementation and deployment. Problems include insufficient inter-departmental collaboration, unclear dynamic inventories at all levels, a lack of basis for emergency procurement and redundant reserves of special materials.

Second, the legal basis for law-based management needs to be filled. There are no provincial regulations on material reserves. Departments manage reserves mainly through normative documents or storage contracts, which are far from the requirements of law-based governance. Lack of legal basis weakens law enforcement and threatens public safety.

Third, daily management norms need to be improved. Insufficient staffing and incomplete information supervision systems exist. Inadequate standardized management may lead to irregular disposal of scrapped reserves and negative public opinions.

Fourth, supporting guarantee systems need strengthening. Problems such as insufficient warehouse space, outdated facilities, blocked procurement and rotation mechanisms, single varieties and over-stored materials affect the timely availability and usability of reserves.

4. Legislative suggestions

4.1. Rationalize the material reserve management system

First, rationalize the horizontal management system. Clarify the division of responsibilities: development and reform departments take overall responsibility, finance departments provide funding, reserve departments implement storage, and emergency response departments authorize deployment. Define the responsibilities of departments in demand formulation, storage, rotation, scrapping and deployment.

Second, establish a vertical hierarchical management system. Clarify the provincial, prefectural and county-level hierarchical management and collaborative emergency guarantee mechanisms. Regulate the authority, procedures, allocation and expenses of cross-level deployment. Strengthen the construction of reserve warehouses at the county, township, subdistrict and village levels through new construction, renovation, expansion and leasing.

4.2. Improve the material reserve management mechanism

First, optimize the local material reserve structure. Define qualified storage entities and entrusted storage enterprises. Specify that government physical reserves shall generally account for no less than 50% of required materials.

Second, establish an information reporting system. Require storage entities to keep accounts and report purchase and storage data regularly. Promote data sharing between special material departments and the grain and material reserve authorities.

Third, establish an emergency procurement system to regulate emergency supply procedures.

Fourth, build a provincial unified cloud platform for material reserve management, establish a full-variety database, and realize real-time monitoring for decision-making and supervision.

4.3. Consolidate material reserve management responsibilities

First, legalize the supervision and law enforcement powers of relevant departments. Clarify that reserve departments implement storage, rotation, daily management and supervision; development and reform and finance departments conduct inspections and performance evaluations. Require units and individuals to cooperate with supervision.

Second, specify storage requirements. Require special warehouses, special personnel and special accounts to ensure true quantity, good quality and safe storage. Prohibit encroachment, damage and misappropriation.

Third, standardize the whole process management, including planning, implementation, acceptance, layout, storage, warehousing, rotation, deployment, cost, recovery and scrappage.

4.4. Innovate institutional supply for reserve management

First, establish a government financial support system to improve infrastructure and funding mechanisms.

Second, establish a reserve safety risk reporting system. Require storage entities to implement internal management and be accountable for quantity and quality.

Third, establish a liability system for violations. Rescind contracts and claim compensation for losses caused by violations.

Fourth, establish a reporting system to encourage public supervision over illegal acts.

4.5. Improve the mechanism for management, disposal, update and rotation

Promote unified identification of emergency materials. Improve daily management mechanisms covering planning, procurement, storage, allocation, disposal, inspection and pre-positioning. Increase high-tech and practical materials, eliminate outdated ones, and optimize layout and categories. Improve the disposal system for expired materials, and implement regular inspection, maintenance, scrappage and renewal to maintain stable quantity, good performance and high efficiency.

4.6. Strengthen emergency response capabilities

Give play to the role of material reserves in emergencies. Establish a dynamic adjustment mechanism for emergency procurement, rotation, deployment, free use, cost advance and early warning. Improve regional cooperation, mutual assistance and compensation mechanisms within the Yangtze River Delta, and strengthen inter-provincial emergency support collaboration.

5. Conclusion

Local material reserves must be managed in accordance with the law. Focusing on reserve safety, local material reserve legislation should cover physical reserves at provincial, prefectural and county levels, follow the principles of government leadership, social participation, hierarchical responsibility, classified management and coordinated guarantee, and build a diversified pattern combining physical and production capacity reserves, as well as government and social reserves, to provide institutional support for improving overall efficiency, risk prevention and emergency response capabilities^[4].

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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