

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2011

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HOUSE BILL 174

Short Title: Commercial Real Estate Broker Lien Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives McCormick, Gibson, Daughtry, and Murry (Primary Sponsors).  
For a complete list of Sponsors, see Bill Information on the NCGA Web Site.

Referred to: Commerce and Job Development, if favorable, Judiciary Subcommittee A.

February 24, 2011

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ENACT THE COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE BROKER LIEN ACT.

3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 SECTION 1. Article 2 of Chapter 44A of the General Statutes is amended by  
5 adding a new Part to read:

6 "Part 4. Commercial Real Estate Broker Lien Act.

7 "§ 44A-24.1. Short title.

8 This Part shall be known and may be cited as the 'Commercial Real Estate Broker Lien  
9 Act.'

10 "§ 44A-24.2. Definitions.

11 The following definitions apply in this Part:

- 12 (1) Broker. – A real estate broker licensed pursuant to Chapter 93A of the  
13 General Statutes.
- 14 (2) Broker services. – Services for which a license issued by the North Carolina  
15 Real Estate Commission is required.
- 16 (3) Commercial real estate. – Any real property or interest therein, whether  
17 freehold or nonfreehold, which at the time the property or interest is made  
18 the subject of an agreement for brokerage services:  
19 a. Is lawfully used primarily for sales, office, research, institutional,  
20 warehouse, manufacturing, industrial, or mining purposes or for  
21 multifamily residential purposes involving five or more dwelling  
22 units;  
23 b. May lawfully be used for any of the purposes listed in subdivision (1)  
24 of this section by a zoning ordinance adopted pursuant to the  
25 provisions of Article 18 of Chapter 153A or Article 19 of Chapter  
26 160A of the General Statutes or which is the subject of an official  
27 application or petition to amend the applicable zoning ordinance to  
28 permit any of the uses listed in subdivision (1) of this section which  
29 is under consideration by the government agency with authority to  
30 approve the amendment; or  
31 c. Is in good faith intended to be immediately used for any of the  
32 purposes listed in subdivision (1) of this section by the parties to any  
33 contract, lease, option, or offer to make any contract, lease, or option.
- 34 (4) Commission. – Any compensation which is due a broker for performance of  
35 broker services.



1           (5)    Lien claimant. – A broker claiming a lien pursuant to this Part.

2           (6)    Owner. – The owner of record of commercial real estate.

3    **"§ 44A-24.3. Commercial real estate lien.**

4           (a)    A broker shall have a lien upon commercial real estate or any interest in that  
5 commercial real estate in the amount that the broker is due under a written instrument signed by  
6 the owner of an interest in the commercial real estate or signed by the owner's duly authorized  
7 agent.

8           (b)    The lien under this section shall be available only to the broker named in the  
9 instrument signed by the owner, buyer, or tenant or by the agent of the owner, buyer, or tenant.

10 **"§ 44A-24.4. Lien notice; content.**

11           (a)    A lien notice under this Part shall be signed by the lien claimant and shall contain an  
12 attestation by the lien claimant that the information contained in the notice is true and accurate  
13 to the best of the lien claimant's knowledge and belief.

14           (b)    The lien notice shall include all of the following information:

15               (1)    The name of the lien claimant.

16               (2)    The name of the owner of the commercial real estate.

17               (3)    A description of the commercial real estate upon which the lien is being  
18 claimed.

19               (4)    The amount for which the lien is claimed.

20               (5)    The basis for the lien.

21 **"§ 44A-24.5. When lien attaches to commercial real estate.**

22           A lien authorized by this Part attaches to the commercial real estate, or an interest in the  
23 commercial real estate, when the lien claimant files notice of the lien in the office of the  
24 register of deeds of the county in which the real property, or any interest in the real property is  
25 located, if such lien is filed prior to the actual conveyance or transfer of the commercial real  
26 estate subject to the lien, except that in the case of a lease, the claim for lien shall be filed  
27 within 90 days after the tenant takes possession of the leased property.

28 **"§ 44A-24.6. When lien claim release or satisfaction to be filed.**

29           If a claim for a lien has been filed with the register of deeds and a condition occurs that  
30 would preclude the lien claimant from receiving compensation under the terms of the written  
31 instrument on which the lien is based, the lien claimant shall file and provide the owner of  
32 record a written release or satisfaction of the lien.

33 **"§ 44A-24.7. Lien claimant to mail copy of notice of lien to owner by certified mail.**

34           Any lien claimant who files a lien on commercial property pursuant to the provisions of this  
35 Part shall mail a copy of the notice of the lien to the owner of the commercial real estate by  
36 certified mail or return receipt requested or shall serve a copy of the notice of the lien in  
37 accordance with any of the provisions for service of process set forth in G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4. The  
38 lien is void if the lien claimant does not file the lien as provided in this Part.

39 **"§ 44A-24.8. Enforcing lien.**

40           A lien claimant may bring suit to enforce a lien which attaches pursuant to the provisions of  
41 this Part in any court of competent jurisdiction in the county where the property is located by  
42 filing a verified petition that the lien has been properly filed. Unless the claim is based upon an  
43 option to purchase the commercial real estate, the lien claimant shall commence proceedings  
44 within two years after filing the lien, and failure to commence proceedings within the two years  
45 shall extinguish the lien. A claim for the same lien extinguished pursuant to this section and  
46 G.S. 44A-24.10 may not be asserted in any subsequent proceeding.

47 **"§ 44A-24.9. Petition; content; parties' foreclosure action; procedure.**

48           (a)    A petition filed pursuant to the provisions of this section and G.S. 44A-24.8 shall  
49 contain all of the following:

50               (1)    A statement of the terms of the contract or agreement on which the lien is  
51 based.

- 1           (2)    The date when the contract or agreement was made.
- 2           (3)    A description of the services performed.
- 3           (4)    The amount due and unpaid.
- 4           (5)    A description of the property that is subject to the lien.
- 5           (6)    Any other facts necessary for a full understanding of the rights of the parties.

6       (b)    The plaintiff shall file the action against all parties which have an interest of record  
7 in the commercial real estate. A foreclosure action for a lien claimed pursuant to this Part shall  
8 be brought pursuant to the provisions of Article 1 of Chapter 44A of the General Statutes.

9       (c)    Valid prior recorded liens or mortgages shall have priority over a lien under this  
10 Part.

11 **"§ 44A-24.10. Lien extinguished for lien claimant failing to file suit or answer in pending**  
12 **suit within 30 days after service on owner.**

13       If a lien claimant fails to file a suit to enforce the lien or fails to file an answer in a pending  
14 suit to enforce a lien within 30 days after a properly served written demand of the owner,  
15 lienee, or other authorized agent, the lien shall be extinguished. Service of the demand shall be  
16 by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, or by personal service. The provisions  
17 of this section shall not extend to any other deadline provided by law or the filing of any  
18 pleadings or for the foreclosure of any lien governed by this Part.

19 **"§ 44A-24.11. Satisfaction or release of lien.**

20       If a claim for lien has been filed pursuant to the provisions of this Part with the register of  
21 deeds and the claim has been paid in full or if the lien claimant fails to institute a suit to enforce  
22 the lien within the time as provided by law, the lien claimant shall acknowledge satisfaction or  
23 release of the lien in writing upon written demand of the owner within 60 days after the  
24 demand.

25 **"§ 44A-24.12. Cost of proceeding to be paid by nonprevailing party.**

26       The costs of any proceeding brought to enforce a lien filed pursuant to this Part, including  
27 reasonable attorneys' fees and prejudgment interest due to the prevailing party, shall be paid by  
28 the nonprevailing party or parties. If more than one party is responsible for costs, fees, and  
29 prejudgment interest, the costs, fees, and prejudgment interest shall be equitably apportioned by  
30 the court among the responsible parties.

31 **"§ 44A-24.13. Escrow account.**

32       (a)    Unless an alternative procedure is available and is acceptable to the transferee in a  
33 real estate transaction, if a lien claim under this Part has been filed with the register of deeds  
34 and that lien would prevent the closing of a transaction or conveyance, an escrow account shall  
35 be established with the clerk of the superior court in the county in which the commercial real  
36 estate is located from the proceeds of the transaction or conveyance in an amount equal to one  
37 hundred fifty percent (150%) of the amount that is sufficient to release the claim of lien. The  
38 requirement to establish an escrow account, as provided in this section, shall not be cause for  
39 any party to refuse to close a transaction. The proceeds held in that escrow account shall be  
40 held by the clerk until the parties' rights to the escrowed funds have been determined by one of  
41 the following:

- 42           (1)    Written agreement of the parties.
- 43           (2)    A final judgment of a court of competent jurisdiction.
- 44           (3)    Other process to which the parties may agree.

45       (b)    If funds in an amount equal to one hundred fifty percent (150%) of the amount that  
46 is sufficient to release the claim of lien have been deposited in the escrow account, the lien  
47 claimant shall release the claim for the lien on the real estate, and the lien claimant shall have a  
48 lien on the escrowed funds."

49       **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2011.