

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2015

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SENATE BILL 716
Commerce Committee Substitute Adopted 5/21/15

Short Title: Mountain Energy Act of 2015.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

May 20, 2015

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO: (1) DIRECT THE NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION TO RENDER AN EXPEDITED DECISION, UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, ON AN APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY FOR AN APPLICANT TO CONSTRUCT A GENERATING FACILITY THAT USES NATURAL GAS AS THE PRIMARY FUEL AND (2) MODIFY CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE COAL ASH MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2014 FOR COAL ASH SURFACE IMPOUNDMENTS LOCATED ON SITES AT WHICH ALL COAL-FIRED GENERATING UNITS PRESENT ON THOSE SITES WILL PERMANENTLY CEASE OPERATIONS BY JANUARY 31, 2020.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding G.S. 62-110.1, the Commission shall provide an expedited decision on an application for a certificate to construct a generating facility that uses natural gas as the primary fuel if the application meets the requirements of this section. When the public utility applies for a certificate as provided in this section, it shall submit to the Commission an estimate of the costs of construction of the gas-fired generating unit in such detail as the Commission may require. G.S. 62-110.1(e) and G.S. 62-82(a) shall not apply to a certificate applied for under this section. The Commission shall render its decision on an application for a certificate, including any related transmission line located on the site of the new generation facility, within 45 days of the date the application is filed if all of the following apply:

- (1) The application for a certificate is for a generating facility to be constructed at the site of the Asheville Steam Electric Generating Plant located in Buncombe County.
- (2) The public utility will permanently cease operations of all coal-fired generating units at the site on or before the commercial operation of the generating unit that is the subject of the certificate application.
- (3) The new natural gas-fired generating facility has no more than twice the generation capacity as the coal-fired generating units to be retired.

SECTION 2.(a) Section 3(b) of S.L. 2014-122 reads as rewritten:

"SECTION 3.(b) Notwithstanding G.S. 130A-309.211 or G.S. 130A-309.212, as enacted by Section 3(a) of this act, and except as otherwise preempted by the requirements of federal law, the following coal combustion residuals surface impoundments shall be deemed high-priority and, as soon as practicable, but no later than August 1, 2019, and shall be closed in conformance with Section 3(c) of this act: act as follows:



- 1 (1) Coal combustion residuals surface impoundments located at the Dan River
2 Steam Station, owned and operated by Duke Energy Progress, and located in
3 Rockingham ~~County~~ County, as soon as practicable, but no later than August
4 1, 2019.
- 5 (2) Coal combustion residuals surface impoundments located at the Riverbend
6 Steam Station, owned and operated by Duke Energy Carolinas, and located
7 in Gaston ~~County~~ County, as soon as practicable, but no later than August 1,
8 2019.
- 9 (3) Coal combustion residuals surface impoundments located at the Asheville
10 Steam Electric Generating Plant, owned and operated by Duke Energy
11 Progress, and located in Buncombe ~~County~~ County, as soon as practicable,
12 but no later than August 1, 2022.
- 13 (4) Coal combustion residuals surface impoundments located at the Sutton
14 Plant, owned and operated by Duke Energy Progress, and located in New
15 Hanover ~~County~~ County, as soon as practicable, but no later than August 1,
16 2019."

17 **SECTION 2.(b)** The requirements of subsections (c) through (f) of
18 G.S. 130A-309.210 shall not apply to coal combustion residuals surface impoundments and
19 electric generating facilities located at the Asheville Steam Electric Generating Plant located in
20 Buncombe County.

21 **SECTION 2.(c)** This section becomes effective August 1, 2016, if, on or before
22 that date, the North Carolina Utilities Commission has issued a certificate of public
23 convenience and necessity to Duke Energy Progress for a new natural gas-fired generating
24 facility, pursuant to Section 1 of this act, based upon written notice submitted to the
25 Commission from Duke Energy Progress that it will permanently cease operations of all
26 coal-fired generating units at the Asheville Steam Electric Generating Plant located in
27 Buncombe County no later than January 31, 2020.

28 **SECTION 3.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes
29 law.