

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE BILL 799

Short Title: Utility Billing by Lessors.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representative Bradford.

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Energy and Public Utilities

April 13, 2017

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ALLOW FOR LANDLORDS TO CHARGE INDIVIDUAL TENANTS FOR
3 SHARED COST OF NATURAL GAS SERVICE PROVIDED TO LEASED PREMISES.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 SECTION 1. G.S. 42-42.1 reads as rewritten:

6 "§ 42-42.1. **Water and electricity conservation.**

7 (a) For the purpose of encouraging ~~water and electricity~~water, electricity, and gas
8 conservation, pursuant to a written rental agreement, a landlord may charge for the cost of
9 providing water or sewer service to tenants ~~who occupy the same contiguous premises~~pursuant
10 to ~~G.S. 62-110(g) or G.S. 62-110(g)~~, electric service pursuant to ~~G.S. 62-110(h)~~G.S. 62-110(h),
11 or natural gas service pursuant to G.S. 62-110(i).

12 (b) The landlord may not disconnect or terminate the tenant's electric service or water
13 or sewer services due to the tenant's nonpayment of the amount due for electric service or water
14 or sewer services."

15 SECTION 2. G.S. 62-110 reads as rewritten:

16 "§ 62-110. **Certificate of convenience and necessity.**

17 ...

18 (g) In addition to the authority to issue a certificate of public convenience and necessity
19 and establish rates otherwise granted in this Chapter, for the purpose of encouraging water
20 conservation, the Commission may, consistent with the public interest, adopt procedures that
21 allow a lessor to charge for the costs of providing water or sewer service to persons who
22 occupy the ~~same contiguous~~leased premises. The following provisions shall apply:

23 ...

24 (1a) If the ~~contiguous-leased~~ premises ~~were~~are contiguous dwelling units built
25 prior to ~~1989~~1989, and the lessor determines that the measurement of the
26 ~~tenant's lessee's~~total water usage is impractical or not economical, the lessor
27 may allocate the cost for water and sewer service to the ~~tenant~~lessee using
28 equipment that measures the ~~tenant's lessee's~~hot water usage. In that case,
29 each ~~tenant~~lessee shall be billed a percentage of the landlord's water and
30 sewer costs for water usage in the dwelling units based upon the hot water
31 used in the ~~tenant's lessee's~~dwelling unit. The percentage of total water usage
32 allocated for each dwelling unit shall be equal to that dwelling unit's
33 individually submetered hot water usage divided by all submetered hot water
34 usage in all dwelling units. The following conditions apply to billing for
35 water and sewer service under this subdivision:



- 1 a. A lessor shall not utilize a ratio utility billing system or other
2 allocation billing system that does not rely on individually
3 submetered hot water usage to determine the allocation of water and
4 sewer costs.
- 5 b. The lessor shall not include in a ~~tenant's~~lessee's bill the cost of water
6 and sewer service used in common areas or water loss due to leaks in
7 the lessor's water mains. A lessor shall not bill or attempt to collect
8 for excess water usage resulting from a plumbing malfunction or
9 other condition that is not known to the ~~tenant~~lessee or that has been
10 reported to the lessor.
- 11 c. All equipment used to measure water usage shall comply with
12 guidelines promulgated by the American Water Works Association.
- 13 d. The lessor shall maintain records for a minimum of 12 months that
14 demonstrate how each ~~tenant's~~lessee's allocated costs were
15 calculated for water and sewer service. Upon advanced written notice
16 to the lessor, a ~~tenant~~lessee may inspect the records during
17 reasonable business hours.
- 18 e. Bills for water and sewer service sent by the lessor to the ~~tenant~~lessee
19 shall contain all the following information:
- 20 1. The amount of water and sewer services allocated to the
21 ~~tenant~~lessee during the billing period.
- 22 2. The method used to determine the amount of water and sewer
23 services allocated to the ~~tenant~~lessee.
- 24 3. Beginning and ending dates for the billing period.
- 25 4. The past-due date, which shall not be less than 25 days after
26 the bill is mailed.
- 27 5. A local or toll-free telephone number and address that the
28 ~~tenant~~lessee can use to obtain more information about the bill.
- 29 (2) The lessor may charge a reasonable administrative fee for providing water or
30 sewer service not to exceed the maximum administrative fee authorized by
31 the Commission.
- 32 (3) The Commission shall ~~issue~~adopt rules to ~~define contiguous premises and to~~
33 ~~implement this subsection. In issuing the rule to define contiguous premises,~~
34 ~~the Commission shall consider contiguous premises where manufactured~~
35 ~~homes, as defined in G.S. 143-145(7), or spaces for manufactured homes are~~
36 ~~rented.~~
- 37 (4) The Commission shall develop an application that lessors must submit for
38 authority to charge for water or sewer service. The form shall include all of
39 the following:
- 40 a. A description of the applicant and the property to be served.
- 41 b. A description of the proposed billing method and billing statements.
- 42 c. The schedule of rates charged to the applicant by the supplier.
- 43 d. The schedule of rates the applicant proposes to charge the applicant's
44 customers.
- 45 e. The administrative fee proposed to be charged by the applicant.
- 46 f. The name of and contact information for the applicant and its agents.
- 47 g. The name of and contact information for the supplying water or
48 sewer system.
- 49 h. Any additional information that the Commission may require.
- 50 (4a) The Commission shall develop an application that lessors must submit for
51 authority to charge for water or sewer service at single-family dwellings that

- 1 allows the applicant to serve multiple dwellings in the State, subject to an
2 approval by the Commission. The form shall include all of the following:
- 3 a. A description of the applicant and a listing of the addresses of all the
4 properties to be served. An updated listing of addresses served by the
5 applicant shall be provided to the Commission annually.
- 6 b. A description of the proposed billing method and billing statements.
7 c. The administrative fee proposed to be charged by the applicant.
8 d. The name and contact information for the applicant and its agents.
9 e. Any additional information the Commission may require.
- 10 (5) The Commission shall approve or disapprove an application within 30 days
11 of the filing of a completed application with the Commission. If the
12 Commission has not issued an order disapproving a completed application
13 within 30 days, the application shall be deemed approved.
- 14 (6) A provider of water or sewer service under this subsection may increase the
15 rate for service so long as the rate does not exceed the unit consumption rate
16 charged by the supplier of the service. A provider of water or sewer service
17 under this subsection may change the administrative fee so long as the
18 administrative fee does not exceed the maximum administrative fee
19 authorized by the Commission. In order to change the rate or administrative
20 fee, the provider shall file a notice of revised schedule of rates and fees with
21 the Commission. The Commission may prescribe the form by which the
22 provider files a notice of a revised schedule of rates and fees under this
23 subsection. The form shall include all of the following:
- 24 a. The current schedule of the unit consumption rates charged by the
25 provider.
- 26 b. The schedule of rates charged by the supplier to the provider that the
27 provider proposes to pass through to the provider's customers.
- 28 c. The schedule of the unit consumption rates proposed to be charged
29 by the provider.
- 30 d. The current administrative fee charged by the provider, if applicable.
- 31 e. The administrative fee proposed to be charged by the provider.
- 32 (7) A notification of revised schedule of rates and fees shall be presumed valid
33 and shall be allowed to become effective upon 14 days notice to the
34 Commission, unless otherwise suspended or disapproved by order issued
35 within 14 days after filing.
- 36 (8) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, the Commission shall
37 determine the extent to which the services shall be regulated and, to the
38 extent necessary to protect the public interest, regulate the terms, conditions,
39 and rates that may be charged for the services. Nothing in this subsection
40 shall be construed to alter the rights, obligations, or remedies of persons
41 providing water or sewer services and their customers under any other
42 provision of law.
- 43 (9) A provider of water or sewer service under this subsection shall not be
44 required to file annual reports pursuant to G.S. 62-36 or to furnish a bond
45 pursuant to G.S. 62-110.3.
- 46 (h) In addition to the authority to issue a certificate of public convenience and necessity
47 and establish rates otherwise granted in this Chapter, the Commission may, consistent with the
48 public interest, adopt procedures that allow a lessor of a single-family dwelling, residential
49 building-building, or multiunit apartment complex that has individually metered units for
50 electric service in the lessor's name to charge for the actual costs of providing electric service to

1 each ~~tenant when the lessor has a separate lease for each bedroom in the unit.~~lessee. The
2 following provisions shall apply to the charges authorized under this subsection:

- 3 (1) The lessor shall equally divide the actual amount of the individual electric
4 service bill for a unit among all the ~~tenants-lessees~~ in the unit and shall send
5 one bill to each ~~tenant-lessee.~~ The amount charged shall be prorated when a
6 ~~tenant-lessee~~ has not leased the unit for the same number of days as the other
7 ~~tenants-lessees~~ in the unit during the billing period. Each bill may include an
8 administrative fee up to the amount of the then-current administrative fee
9 authorized by the Commission in Rule 18-6 for water service and, when
10 applicable, a late fee in an amount determined by the Commission. The
11 lessor shall not charge the cost of electricity from any other unit or common
12 area in a ~~tenant's-lessee's~~ bill. The lessor may, at the lessor's option, pay any
13 portion of any bill sent to a ~~tenant-lessee.~~
- 14 (2) A lessor who charges for electric service under this subsection is solely
15 responsible for the prompt payment of all bills rendered by the electric utility
16 providing service to the ~~residential building or complex~~leased premises and
17 is the customer of the electric utility subject to all rules, regulations, tariffs,
18 riders, and service regulations associated with the provision of electric
19 service to retail customers of the utility.
- 20 (3) The lessor shall maintain records for a minimum of 36 months that
21 demonstrate how each ~~tenant's-lessee's~~ allocated costs were calculated for
22 electric service. A ~~tenant-lessee~~ may inspect these records, including the
23 actual per unit public utility billings, during reasonable business hours and
24 may obtain copies of the records for a reasonable copying fee.
- 25 (4) Bills for electric service sent by the lessor to the ~~tenant-lessee~~ shall contain
26 all of the following information:
- 27 a. ~~The~~When the lessor of a residential building or multiunit apartment
28 complex has a separate lease for each bedroom in the unit, the bill
29 charged by the electric supplier for the unit as a whole and the
30 amount of charges allocated to the tenant-lessee during the billing
31 period.
- 32 b. The name of the electric power supplier providing electric service to
33 the ~~unit~~leased premises.
- 34 c. Beginning and ending dates for the usage period and, if provided by
35 the electric supplier, the date the meter was read for that usage
36 period.
- 37 d. The past-due date, which shall not be less than 25 days after the bill
38 is mailed to the ~~tenant-lessee.~~
- 39 e. A local or toll-free telephone number and address that the ~~tenant~~
40 lessee can use to obtain more information about the bill.
- 41 f. The amount of any administrative fee and late fee approved by the
42 Commission and included in the bill.
- 43 g. A statement of the ~~tenant's-lessee's~~ right to address questions about
44 the bill to the lessor and the ~~tenant's-lessee's~~ right to file a complaint
45 with, or otherwise seek recourse from, the Commission if the ~~tenant~~
46 lessee cannot resolve an electric service billing dispute with the
47 lessor.
- 48 (5) The Commission shall develop an application that a ~~lessor~~lessors must
49 submit for Commission approval to charge for electric service as provided in
50 this section. The form shall include all of the following:
- 51 a. A description of the lessor and the property to be served.

- 1 b. A description of the proposed billing method and billing statements.
2 c. The administrative fee and late payment fee, if any, proposed to be
3 charged by the lessor.
4 d. The name of and contact information for the lessor and the lessor's
5 agents.
6 e. The name of and contact information for the supplier of electric
7 service to the lessor's rental property.
8 f. A copy of the lease forms used by the lessor for ~~tenants-lessees~~ who
9 are billed for electric service pursuant to this subsection.
10 g. Any additional information that the Commission may require.
- 11 (6) The Commission shall approve or disapprove an application within 60 days
12 of the filing of a completed application with the Commission. If the
13 Commission has not issued an order disapproving a completed application
14 within 60 days, the application shall be deemed approved.
- 15 (7) A lessor who charges for electric service under this subsection shall not be
16 required to file annual reports pursuant to G.S. 62-36.
- 17 (7a) An applicant may submit for authority to charge for electric service for more
18 than one property in a single application. Information relating to all
19 properties covered by the application need only be provided once in the
20 application.
- 21 (8) The Commission shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this
22 subsection.
- 23 (i) In addition to the authority to issue a certificate of public convenience and necessity
24 and establish rates otherwise granted in this Chapter, the Commission may, consistent with the
25 public interest, adopt procedures that allow a lessor of single-family dwelling, a residential
26 building, or multiunit apartment complex that has individually metered units for natural gas
27 service in the lessor's name to charge for the actual costs of providing natural gas service to
28 each lessee. The following provisions shall apply to the charges authorized under this
29 subsection:
- 30 (1) The lessor shall equally divide the actual amount of the individual natural
31 gas service bill for a unit among all the lessees in the unit and shall send one
32 bill to each lessee. The amount charged shall be prorated when a lessee has
33 not leased the unit for the same number of days as the other lessees in the
34 unit during the billing period. Each bill may include an administrative fee up
35 to the amount of the then-current administrative fee authorized by the
36 Commission in Rule 18-6 for water service and, when applicable, a late fee
37 in an amount determined by the Commission. The lessor shall not charge the
38 cost of natural gas service from any other unit or common area in a lessee's
39 bill. The lessor may, at the lessor's option, pay any portion of any bill sent to
40 a lessee.
- 41 (2) A lessor who charges for natural gas service under this subsection is solely
42 responsible for the prompt payment of all bills rendered by the natural gas
43 utility providing service to the leased premises and is the customer of the
44 natural gas utility subject to all rules, regulations, tariffs, riders, and service
45 regulations associated with the provision of natural gas service to retail
46 customers of the utility.
- 47 (3) The lessor shall maintain records for a minimum of 36 months that
48 demonstrate how each lessee's allocated costs were calculated for natural gas
49 service. A lessee may inspect these records, including the actual per unit
50 public utility billings, during reasonable business hours and may obtain
51 copies of the records for a reasonable copying fee.

- 1 (4) Bills for natural gas service sent by the lessor to the lessee shall contain all
2 of the following information:
3 a. When the lessor of a residential building or multiunit apartment
4 complex has a separate lease for each bedroom in the unit, the bill
5 charged by the natural gas supplier for the unit as a whole and the
6 amount of charges allocated to the lessee during the billing period.
7 b. The name of the natural gas supplier providing natural gas service to
8 the leased premises.
9 c. Beginning and ending dates for the usage period and, if provided by
10 the natural gas supplier, the date the meter was read for that usage
11 period.
12 d. The past-due date, which shall not be less than 25 days after the bill
13 is mailed to the lessee.
14 e. A local or toll-free telephone number and address that the lessee can
15 use to obtain more information about the bill.
16 f. The amount of any administrative fee and late fee approved by the
17 Commission and included in the bill.
18 g. A statement of the lessee's right to address questions about the bill to
19 the lessor and the lessee's right to file a complaint with, or otherwise
20 seek recourse from, the Commission if the lessee cannot resolve a
21 natural gas service billing dispute with the lessor.
22 (5) The Commission shall develop an application that lessors must submit for
23 Commission approval to charge for natural gas service as provided in this
24 section. The form shall include all of the following:
25 a. A description of the lessor and the property to be served.
26 b. A description of the proposed billing method and billing statements.
27 c. The administrative fee and late payment fee, if any, proposed to be
28 charged by the lessor.
29 d. The name of and contact information for the lessor and the lessor's
30 agents.
31 e. The name of and contact information for the supplier of natural gas
32 service to the lessor's rental property.
33 f. A copy of the lease forms used by the lessor for lessees who are
34 billed for natural gas service pursuant to this subsection.
35 g. Any additional information that the Commission may require.
36 (6) The Commission shall approve or disapprove an application within 60 days
37 of the filing of a completed application with the Commission. If the
38 Commission has not issued an order disapproving a completed application
39 within 60 days, the application shall be deemed approved.
40 (7) A lessor who charges for natural gas service under this subsection shall not
41 be required to file annual reports pursuant to G.S. 62-36.
42 (7a) An applicant may submit for authority to charge for natural gas service for
43 more than one property in a single application. Information relating to all
44 properties covered by the application need only be provided once in the
45 application.
46 (8) The Commission shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this
47 subsection."

48 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2017.