

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2023

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SENATE BILL 58  
Agriculture, Energy, and Environment Committee Substitute Adopted 2/28/23  
Judiciary Committee Substitute Adopted 3/7/23

Short Title: Protect Critical Infrastructure.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 2, 2023

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO INCREASE THE PUNISHMENT FOR PROPERTY CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST UTILITIES, INCLUDING FACILITIES INVOLVED IN THE TRANSMISSION OF TELEPHONE, BROADBAND, OR CABLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES AND FACILITIES INVOLVED IN THE PRODUCTION, STORAGE, TRANSMISSION, OR DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTRICITY, FUEL, OR ANOTHER FORM OR SOURCE OF ENERGY.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** Article 22 of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 14-150.2. Injuring energy facility.**

(a) Definition. – For purposes of this section, the term "energy facility" means any facility involved in (i) the production, storage, transmission, or distribution of electricity, fuel, or another form or source of energy or (ii) research, development, or demonstration related to the production, storage, transmission, or distribution of electricity, fuel, or another form or source of energy. This term includes any:

(1) Facility in operation, under construction, or otherwise not functioning; and

(2) Line, wire, pipe, or other property or equipment used as part of the normal operation of the facility.

(b) Offense. – It is unlawful to knowingly and willfully destroy, injure, or otherwise damage, or attempt to destroy, injure, or otherwise damage, an energy facility.

(c) Punishment. – A person who violates subsection (b) of this section is guilty of a Class C felony, except that a violation that results in the death of another is a Class B2 felony. Additionally, a person who violates subsection (b) of this section shall be ordered to pay a fine of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000).

(d) Merger. – Each violation of this section constitutes a separate offense and shall not merge with any other offense.

(e) Civil Liability. – Any person whose property or person is injured by reason of a violation of this section may sue for and recover treble damages, costs, and attorneys' fees from the person who committed the violation of this section and any person who acts as an accessory before or after the fact, aids or abets, solicits, conspires, or lends material support to the violation of this section. The rights and remedies provided by this subsection are in addition to any other rights and remedies provided by law. For purposes of this subsection, the term "damages" includes actual and consequential damages.



1       (f) Nothing in this section shall apply to demolition work and other activity that is  
2 performed at or on an energy facility by the owner or operator of the facility, or an agent of the  
3 owner or operator authorized to perform such work or activity by the owner or operator."

4       **SECTION 2.** G.S. 14-159.12 reads as rewritten:

5       "**§ 14-159.12. First degree trespass.**

6       (a) Offense. – A person commits the offense of first degree trespass if, without  
7 authorization, ~~he~~ the person enters or remains;remains on or in any of the following:

8           (1) ~~On~~ The premises of another so enclosed or secured as to demonstrate clearly  
9           an intent to keep out intruders;intruders.

10          (2) ~~In a~~ The building of another; oranother.

11          (3) ~~On the~~ The lands of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians after the person has  
12 been excluded by a resolution passed by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian  
13 Tribal Council.

14       ...

15       (c) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (d) of this section, a violation of  
16 subsection (a) of this section is a Class ~~A1 misdemeanor~~ I felony if all of the following  
17 circumstances exist:

18           (1) The offense is committed on the premises of any of the following:

19           a. ~~A facility that is owned or operated by an electric power supplier as~~  
20 ~~defined in G.S. 62-133.8(a)(3) and that is either an electric generation~~  
21 ~~facility, a transmission substation, a transmission switching station, a~~  
22 ~~transmission switching structure, or a control center used to manage~~  
23 ~~transmission operations or electrical power generating at multiple~~  
24 ~~plant locations.~~

25           b. Any facility used or available for use in the collection, treatment,  
26 testing, storing, pumping, or distribution of water for a public water  
27 system.

28           c. ~~Any facility, including any liquefied natural gas storage facility or~~  
29 ~~propane air facility, that is owned or operated by a natural gas local~~  
30 ~~distribution company, natural gas pipeline carrier operating under a~~  
31 ~~certificate of public convenience and necessity from the Utilities~~  
32 ~~Commission, municipal corporation operating a municipally owned~~  
33 ~~gas distribution system, or regional natural gas district organized and~~  
34 ~~operated pursuant to Article 28 of Chapter 160A of the General~~  
35 ~~Statutes used for transmission, distribution, measurement, testing,~~  
36 ~~regulating, compression, control, or storage of natural gas.~~

37           d. Any facility used or operated for agricultural activities, as that term is  
38 defined in G.S. 106-581.1.

39           e. Any facility involved in the production, storage, transmission, or  
40 distribution of electricity, fuel, or another form or source of energy, or  
41 research, development, or demonstration facilities related thereto,  
42 regardless of whether the facility is under construction or is otherwise  
43 not functioning.

44           f. A facility owned by a public utility, as that term is defined under  
45 G.S. 62-3, or a unit of local government, used for the treatment of  
46 wastewater, including sewage, industrial waste, or other wastes of a  
47 liquid nature.

48           (2) The person actually entered a building, or it was necessary for the person to  
49 climb over, go under, or otherwise surmount a fence or other barrier to reach  
50 the facility.

1 (d) If, in addition to the circumstances set out in subsection (c) of this section, the  
2 violation also includes any of the following elements, then the offense is a Class ~~H~~G felony:

3 (1) The offense is committed with the intent to disrupt the normal operation of  
4 any of the facilities described in subdivision (1) of subsection (c) of this  
5 section.

6 (2) The offense involves an act that places either the offender or others on the  
7 premises at risk of serious bodily injury.

8 ...."

9 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 14-154 reads as rewritten:

10 "**§ 14-154. Injuring wires and other fixtures of ~~telephone, telegraph, and electric power~~**  
11 **telephone and broadband companies.**

12 If any person shall willfully injure, ~~destroy~~destroy, or pull down any ~~telegraph, telephone,~~  
13 ~~telephone, broadband, or cable telecommunications,~~ or ~~electric power transmission~~  
14 ~~telecommunications~~ pedestal or pole, or any ~~telegraph, telephone, cable telecommunications,~~ or  
15 ~~electric power line, wire or fiber insulator, power supply, transformer, transmission or other~~  
16 ~~apparatus, equipment~~equipment, or fixture used in the transmission of ~~telegraph, telephone,~~  
17 ~~cable telecommunications, or electrical power service~~telephone, broadband, or cable  
18 telecommunications, or any ~~equipment~~apparatus, equipment, or fixture related to wireless  
19 communications regulated by the Federal Communications Commission, that person shall be  
20 guilty of a Class ~~I~~C felony."

21 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 14-152 and G.S. 14-156 are repealed.

22 **SECTION 5.** Prosecutions for offenses committed before the effective date of this  
23 act are not abated or affected by this act, and the statutes that would be applicable but for this act  
24 remain applicable to those prosecutions.

25 **SECTION 6.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2023, and applies to offenses  
26 committed on or after that date.