Chapter 62.

Public Utilities.

Article 1.

General Provisions.

§ 62-1. Short title.

This Chapter shall be known and may be cited as the Public Utilities Act. (1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-2. Declaration of policy.

(a) Upon investigation, it has been determined that the rates, services and operations of public utilities as defined herein, are affected with the public interest and that the availability of an adequate and reliable supply of electric power and natural gas to the people, economy and government of North Carolina is a matter of public policy. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the State of North Carolina:

(1) To provide fair regulation of public utilities in the interest of the public;

(2) To promote the inherent advantage of regulated public utilities;

(3) To promote adequate, reliable and economical utility service to all of the citizens and residents of the State;

(3a) To assure that resources necessary to meet future growth through the provision of adequate, reliable utility service include use of the entire spectrum of demand-side options, including but not limited to conservation, load management and efficiency programs, as additional sources of energy supply and/or energy demand reductions. To that end, to require energy planning and fixing of rates in a manner to result in the least cost mix of generation and demand-reduction measures which is achievable, including consideration of appropriate rewards to utilities for efficiency and conservation which decrease utility bills;

(4) To provide just and reasonable rates and charges for public utility services without unjust discrimination, undue preferences or advantages, or unfair or destructive competitive practices and consistent with long-term management and conservation of energy resources by avoiding wasteful, uneconomic and inefficient uses of energy;

(4a) To assure that facilities necessary to meet future growth can be financed by the utilities operating in this State on terms which are reasonable and fair to both the customers and existing investors of such utilities; and to that end to authorize fixing of rates in such a manner as to result in lower costs of new facilities and lower rates over the operating lives of such new facilities by making provisions in the ratemaking process for the investment of public utilities in plants under construction;

(5) To encourage and promote harmony between public utilities, their users and the environment;

(6) To foster the continued service of public utilities on a well-planned and coordinated basis that is consistent with the level of energy needed for the protection of public health and safety and for the promotion of the general welfare as expressed in the State energy policy;

(7) To seek to adjust the rate of growth of regulated energy supply facilities serving the State to the policy requirements of statewide development;

(8) To cooperate with other states and with the federal government in promoting and coordinating interstate and intrastate public utility service and reliability of public utility energy supply;

(9) To facilitate the construction of facilities in and the extension of natural gas service to unserved areas in order to promote the public welfare throughout the State and to that end to authorize the creation of expansion funds for natural gas local distribution companies or gas districts to be administered under the supervision of the North Carolina Utilities Commission; and

(10) To promote the development of clean energy and energy efficiency through the implementation of a Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (CEPS) that will do all of the following:

a. Diversify the resources used to reliably meet the energy needs of consumers in the State.

b. Provide greater energy security through the use of indigenous energy resources available within the State.

c. Encourage private investment in clean energy and energy efficiency.

d. Provide improved air quality and other benefits to energy consumers and citizens of the State.

(b) To these ends, therefore, authority shall be vested in the North Carolina Utilities Commission to regulate public utilities generally, their rates, services and operations, and their expansion in relation to long-term energy conservation and management policies and statewide development requirements, and in the manner and in accordance with the policies set forth in this Chapter. Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to imply any extension of Utilities Commission regulatory jurisdiction over any industry or enterprise that is not subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of said Commission.

Because of technological changes in the equipment and facilities now available and needed to provide telephone and telecommunications services, changes in regulatory policies by the federal government, and changes resulting from the court-ordered divestiture of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, competitive offerings of certain types of telephone and telecommunications services may be in the public interest. Consequently, authority shall be vested in the North Carolina Utilities Commission to allow competitive offerings of local exchange, exchange access, and long distance services by public utilities defined in G.S. 62-3(23)a.6. and certified in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 62-110, and the Commission is further authorized after notice to affected parties and hearing to deregulate or to exempt from regulation under any or all provisions of this Chapter: (i) a service provided by any public utility as defined in G.S. 62-3(23)a.6. upon a finding that such service is competitive and that such deregulation or exemption from regulation is in the public interest; or (ii) a public utility as defined in G.S. 62-3(23)a.6., or a portion of the business of such public utility, upon a finding that the service or business of such public utility is competitive and that such deregulation or exemption from regulation is in the public interest.

Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 62-110(b) and G.S. 62-134(h), the following services provided by public utilities defined in G.S. 62-3(23)a.6. are sufficiently competitive and shall no longer be regulated by the Commission: (i) intraLATA long distance service; (ii) interLATA long distance service; and (iii) long distance operator services. A public utility providing such services

shall be permitted, at its own election, to file and maintain tariffs for such services with the Commission up to and including September 1, 2003. Nothing in this subsection shall limit the Commission's authority regarding certification of providers of such services or its authority to hear and resolve complaints against providers of such services alleged to have made changes to the services of customers or imposed charges without appropriate authorization. For purposes of this subsection, and notwithstanding G.S. 62-110(b), "long distance services" shall not include existing or future extended area service, local measured service, or other local calling arrangements, and any future extended area service shall be implemented consistent with Commission rules governing extended area service existing as of May 1, 2003.

The North Carolina Utilities Commission may develop regulatory policies to govern the provision of telecommunications services to the public which promote efficiency, technological innovation, economic growth, and permit telecommunications utilities a reasonable opportunity to compete in an emerging competitive environment, giving due regard to consumers, stockholders, and maintenance of reasonably affordable local exchange service and long distance service.

(b1) Broadband service provided by public utilities as defined in G.S. 62-3(23)a.6. is sufficiently competitive and shall not be regulated by the Commission.

(c) The policy and authority stated in this section shall be applicable to common carriers of passengers by motor vehicle and their regulation by the North Carolina Utilities Commission only to the extent that they are consistent with the provisions of the Bus Regulatory Reform Act of 1985. (1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1975, c. 877, s. 2; 1977, c. 691, s. 1; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1043, s. 1; 1985, c. 676, s. 3; 1987, c. 354; 1989, c. 112, s. 1; 1991, c. 598, s. 1; 1995, c. 27, s. 1; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 742, ss. 29-32; 1998-132, s. 18; 2003-91, s. 1; 2005-95, s. 1; 2007-397, s. 1; 2021-23, s. 25; 2023-138, s. 1(b).)

§ 62-3. Definitions.

As used in this Chapter, unless the context otherwise requires, the term:

(1) "Broadband service" means any service that consists of or includes a high-speed access capability to transmit at a rate of not less than 200 kilobits per second in either the upstream or downstream direction and either (i) is used to provide access to the internet, or (ii) provides computer processing, information storage, information content, or protocol conversion, including any service applications or information service provided over such high-speed access service. "Broadband service" does not include intrastate service that was tariffed by the Commission and in effect as of the effective date of this subdivision.

(1a) "Broker," with regard to motor carriers of passengers, means any person not included in the term "motor carrier" and not a bona fide employee or agent of any such carrier, who or which as principal or agent engages in the business of selling or offering for sale any transportation of passengers by motor carrier, or negotiates for or holds himself, or itself, out by solicitation, advertisements, or otherwise, as one who sells, provides, furnishes, contracts, or arranges for such transportation for compensation, either directly or indirectly.

(1b) "Bus company" means any common carrier by motor vehicle which holds itself out to the general public to engage in the transportation by motor vehicle in intrastate commerce of passengers over fixed routes or in charter operations, or both, except as exempted in G.S. 62-260.

(2) "Certificate" means a certificate of public convenience and necessity issued by the Commission to a person or public utility or a certificate of authority issued by the Commission to a bus company.

(3) "Certified mail" means such mail only when a return receipt is requested.

(4) "Charter operations" with regard to bus companies means the transportation of a group of persons for sightseeing purposes, pleasure tours, and other types of special operations, or the transportation of a group of persons who, pursuant to a common purpose and under a single contract, and for a fixed charge for the vehicle, have acquired the exclusive use of a passenger-carrying motor vehicle to travel together as a group to a specified destination or for a particular itinerary, either agreed upon in advance or modified by the chartered group after having left the place of origin.

(5) "Commission" means the North Carolina Utilities Commission.

(6) "Common carrier" means any person, other than a carrier by rail, which holds itself out to the general public to engage in transportation of persons or household goods for compensation, including transportation by bus, truck, boat or other conveyance, except as exempted in G.S. 62-260.

(7) "Common carrier by motor vehicle" means any person which holds itself out to the general public to engage in the transportation by motor vehicle in intrastate commerce of persons or household goods or any class or classes thereof for compensation, whether over regular or irregular routes, or in charter operations, except as exempted in G.S. 62-260.

(7a) "Competing local provider" means any person applying for a certificate to provide local exchange or exchange access services in competition with a local exchange company.

(8), (9) Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 523, s. 1.

(9a) "Fixed route" means the specific highway or highways over which a bus company is authorized to operate between fixed termini.

(10) "Foreign commerce" means commerce between any place in the United States and any place in a foreign country, or between places in the United States through any foreign country.

(11) "Franchise" means the grant of authority by the Commission to any person to engage in business as a public utility, whether or not exclusive or shared with others or restricted as to terms and conditions and whether described by area or territory or not, and includes certificates, and all other forms of licenses or orders and decisions granting such authority.

(12) "Highway" means any road or street in this State used by the public or dedicated or appropriated to public use.

(13) "Industrial plant" means any plant, mill, or factory engaged in the business of manufacturing.

(14) "Interstate commerce" means commerce between any place in a state and any place in another state or between places in the same state through another state.

(15) "Intrastate commerce" means commerce between points and over a route or within a territory wholly within this State, which commerce is not a part of a prior or subsequent movement to or from points outside of this State in interstate or foreign commerce, and includes all transportation within this State

for compensation in interstate or foreign commerce which has been exempted by Congress from federal regulation.

(16) "Intrastate operations" means the transportation of persons or household goods for compensation in intrastate commerce.

(16a) "Local exchange company" means a person holding, on January 1, 1995, a certificate to provide local exchange services or exchange access services.

(17) "Motor carrier" means a common carrier by motor vehicle.

(18) "Motor vehicle" means any vehicle, machine, tractor, semi-trailer, or any combination thereof, which is propelled or drawn by mechanical power and used upon the highways within the State.

(19) "Municipality" means any incorporated community, whether designated in its charter as a city, town, or village.

(20) Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 523, s. 1.

(21) "Person" means a corporation, individual, copartnership, company, association, or any combination of individuals or organizations doing business as a unit, and includes any trustee, receiver, assignee, lessee, or personal representative thereof.

(21a) "Plug-in electric vehicle" [means] a four-wheeled motor vehicle that meets each of the following requirements:

a. Is made by a manufacturer primarily for use on public streets, roads, and highways and meets National Highway Traffic Safety Administration standards included in 49 C.F.R. § 571.

b. Has not been modified from original manufacturer specifications with regard to power train or any manner of powering the vehicle.

c. Is rated at not more than 8,500 pounds unloaded gross vehicle weight.

d. Has a maximum speed capability of at least 65 miles per hour.

e. Draws electricity from a battery that has all of the following characteristics:

1. A capacity of not less than four kilowatt hours.

2. Capable of being recharged from an external source of electricity.

(22) "Private carrier" means any person, other than a carrier by rail, not included in the definitions of common carrier, which transports in intrastate commerce in its own vehicle or vehicles property of which such person is the owner, lessee, or bailee, when such transportation is for the purpose of sale, lease, rent, or bailment, or when such transportation is purely an incidental adjunct to some other established private business owned and operated by such person other than the transportation of household goods for compensation.

(23)a. "Public utility" means a person, whether organized under the laws of this State or under the laws of any other state or country, now or hereafter owning or operating in this State equipment or facilities for:

1. Producing, generating, transmitting, delivering or furnishing electricity, piped gas, steam or any other like agency for the production of light, heat or power to or for the public for compensation; provided, however, that the term "public utility" shall not include persons who construct or operate an electric

generating facility, the primary purpose of which facility is either for (i) a person's own use and not for the primary purpose of producing electricity, heat, or steam for sale to or for the public for compensation or (ii) a person who constructs or operates an eligible solar energy facility on the site of a customer's property and leases such facility to that customer, as provided by and subject to the limitations of Article 6B of this Chapter;

2. Diverting, developing, pumping, impounding, distributing or furnishing water to or for the public for compensation, or operating a public sewerage system for compensation; provided, however, that the term "public utility" shall not include any person or company whose sole operation consists of selling water or sewer service to less than 15 residential customers, except that any person or company which constructs a water or sewer system in a subdivision with plans for 15 or more lots and which holds itself out by contracts or other means at the time of said construction to serve an area containing more than 15 residential building lots shall be a public utility at the time of such planning or holding out to serve such 15 or more building lots, without regard to the number of actual customers connected;
3. Transporting persons or household goods by street, suburban or interurban bus for the public for compensation;
4. Transporting persons or household goods by motor vehicles or any other form of transportation for the public for compensation, except motor carriers exempted in G.S. 62-260, carriers by rail, and carriers by air;
5. Transporting or conveying gas, crude oil or other fluid substance by pipeline for the public for compensation;
6. Conveying or transmitting messages or communications by telephone or telegraph, or any other means of transmission, where such service is offered to the public for compensation.

b. The term "public utility" shall for ratemaking purposes include any person producing, generating or furnishing any of the foregoing services to another person for distribution to or for the public for compensation.

c. The term "public utility" shall include all persons affiliated through stock ownership with a public utility doing business in this State as parent corporation or subsidiary corporation to such an extent that the Commission shall find that such affiliation has an effect on the rates or service of such public utility.

d. The term "public utility," except as otherwise expressly provided in this Chapter, shall not include the following:
   1. A municipality, county, or a city, town, or village.
   2. A special district, public authority, or unit of local government, as those terms are defined in G.S. 159-7(b) and that is subject to

the provisions of Chapter 159, Subchapter III, Article 3 of the General Statutes.

3. An electric or telephone membership corporation.
4. Any person not otherwise a public utility who furnishes such service or commodity only to himself, his employees or tenants when such service or commodity is not resold to or used by others.

d1. Any person other than a nonprofit organization serving only its members, who distributes or provides utility service to his employees or tenants by individual meters or by other coin-operated devices with a charge for metered or coin-operated utility service shall be a public utility within the definition and meaning of this Chapter with respect to the regulation of rates and provisions of service rendered through such meter or coin-operated device imposing such separate metered utility charge.

d2. If any person conducting a public utility shall also conduct any enterprise not a public utility, such enterprise is not subject to the provisions of this Chapter.

d3. A water or sewer system owned by a homeowners' association that provides water or sewer service only to members or leaseholds of members is not subject to the provisions of this Chapter.

e. The term "public utility" shall include the University of North Carolina insofar as said University supplies telephone service, electricity or water to the public for compensation from the University Enterprises defined in G.S. 116-41.1(9).

f. The term "public utility" shall include the Town of Pineville insofar as said town supplies telephone services to the public for compensation. The territory to be served by the Town of Pineville in furnishing telephone services, subject to the Public Utilities Act, shall include the town limits as they exist on May 8, 1973, and shall also include the area proposed to be annexed under the town's ordinance adopted May 3, 1971, until January 1, 1975.

g. The term "public utility" shall not include a hotel, motel, time share or condominium complex operated primarily to serve transient occupants, which imposes charges to occupants for local, long-distance, or wide area telecommunication services when such calls are completed through the use of facilities provided by a public utility, and provided further that the local services received are rated in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 62-110(d) and the applicable charges for telephone calls are prominently displayed in each area where occupant rooms are located.

h. The term "public utility" shall not include the resale of electricity by (i) a campground operated primarily to serve transient occupants, or (ii) a marina; provided that (i) the campground or marina charges no more than the actual cost of the electricity supplied to it, (ii) the amount of electricity used by each campsite or marina slip occupant is measured by an individual metering device, (iii) the applicable rates are prominently

displayed at or near each campsite or marina slip, and (iv) the campground or marina only resells electricity to campsite or marina slip occupants.

i. The term "public utility" shall not include the State, the Department of Information Technology, or the Microelectronics Center of North Carolina in the provision or sharing of broadband telecommunications services with non-State entities or organizations of the kind or type set forth in G.S. 143B-1371.

j. The term "public utility" shall not include any person, not otherwise a public utility, conveying or transmitting messages or communications by mobile radio communications service. Mobile radio communications service includes one-way or two-way radio service provided to mobile or fixed stations or receivers using mobile radio service frequencies.

k. The term "public utility" shall not include a regional natural gas district organized and operated pursuant to Article 28 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes.

l. The term "public utility" shall include a city or a joint agency under Part 1 of Article 20 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes that provides service as defined in G.S. 62-3(23)a.6. and is subject to the provisions of G.S. 160A-340.1.

m. The term "public utility" shall not include a Ferry Transportation Authority created pursuant to Article 29 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes.

n. The term "public utility" shall not include a person who uses an electric vehicle charging station to resell electricity to the public for compensation, provided that all of the following apply:

1. The reseller has procured the electricity from an electric power supplier, as defined in G.S. 62-133.8(a)(3), that is authorized to engage in the retail sale of electricity within the territory in which the electric vehicle charging service is provided.
2. All resales are exclusively for the charging of plug-in electric vehicles.
3. The charging station is immobile.
4. Utility service to an electric vehicle charging station shall be provided subject to the electric power supplier's terms and conditions.

Nothing in this sub-subdivision shall be construed to limit the ability of an electric power supplier to use electric vehicle charging stations to furnish electricity for charging electric vehicles. Any increases in customer demand or energy consumption associated with transportation electrification shall not constitute found revenues for an electric public utility.

(24) "Rate" means every compensation, charge, fare, tariff, schedule, toll, rental and classification, or any of them, demanded, observed, charged or collected by any public utility, for any service product or commodity offered by it to the public,

and any rules, regulations, practices or contracts affecting any such compensation, charge, fare, tariff, schedule, toll, rental or classification.

(25) "Route" means the course or way which is traveled; the road or highway over which motor vehicles operate.

(26) "Securities" means stock, stock certificates, bonds, notes, debentures, or other evidences of ownership or of indebtedness, and any assumption or guaranty thereof.

(27) "Service" means any service furnished by a public utility, including any commodity furnished as a part of such service and any ancillary service or facility used in connection with such service.

(27a) "Small power producer" means a person or corporation owning or operating an electrical power production facility that qualifies as a "small power production facility" under 16 U.S.C. § 796, as amended.

(28) The word "State" means the State of North Carolina; "state" means any state.

(29) "Town" means any unincorporated community or collection of people having a geographical name by which it may be generally known and is so generally designated.

(30) "Panel" means a panel of three commissioners, a division of the Utilities Commission authorized for the purpose of carrying out certain functions of the Commission. (1913, c. 127, s. 7; C.S., s. 1112(b); 1933, c. 134, ss. 3, 8; c. 307, s. 1; 1937, c. 108, s. 2; 1941, cc. 59, 97; 1947, c. 1008, s. 3; 1949, c. 1132, s. 4; 1953, c. 1140, s. 1; 1957, c. 1152, s. 13; 1959, c. 639, ss. 12, 13; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1967, c. 1094, ss. 1, 2; 1971, c. 553; c. 634, s. 1; cc. 894, 895; 1973, c. 372, s. 1; 1975, c. 243, s. 2; cc. 254, 415; 1979, c. 652, s. 1; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1219, s. 1; 1981 (Reg. Sess., 1982), c. 1186, s. 2; 1985, c. 676, s. 4; 1987, c. 445, s. 2; 1989, c. 110; 1993, c. 349, s. 1; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 777, s. 1(b); 1995, c. 27, ss. 2, 3; c. 509, s. 34; c. 523, s. 1; 1997-426, s. 8; 1997-437, s. 1; 1998-128, ss. 1-3; 2004-199, s. 1; 2004-203, s. 37(a); 2005-95, s. 2; 2011-84, s. 2(a); 2015-241, s. 7A.4(e); 2017-120, s. 2; 2017-192, ss. 1(a), 6(b); 2019-132, s. 1(a), (b); 2021-23, ss. 2, 25; 2025-25, s. 29(3).)

§ 62-4. Applicability of Chapter.

This Chapter shall not terminate the preexisting Commission or appointments thereto, or any certificates, permits, orders, rules or regulations issued by it or any other action taken by it, unless and until revoked by it, nor affect in any manner the existing franchises, territories, tariffs, rates, contracts, service regulations and other obligations and rights of public utilities, unless and until altered or modified by or in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter. (1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-5. Utilities; property affected by boundary certification.

The owner or occupant of a dwelling unit or commercial establishment on improved property that shall be deemed located in whole or in part in the State of North Carolina as a result of the boundary certification described in G.S. 141-9 may continue to receive utility services from the South Carolina utility or its successor that is providing service to the dwelling unit or commercial establishment on January 1, 2017. However, the owner or occupant may, within his or her discretion, elect to have one or more of the utility services being provided to the property by a South Carolina utility on January 1, 2017, be provided by a North Carolina utility as long as the

property is located within the North Carolina utility's service area. A North Carolina utility that is a city or county may require the owner of the property to pay a periodic availability fee authorized by law only if the owner elects to have utility service provided to the dwelling unit or commercial establishment by the North Carolina utility. A South Carolina utility that provides service to the property as authorized in this section is not a public utility under G.S. 62-3(23), and is not subject to regulation by the North Carolina Utilities Commission as it relates to providing the particular utility service involved. For purposes of this section only, the term "South Carolina utility" has the same meaning as the term "utility" or "utilities" in the Code of Laws of South Carolina, and the term "North Carolina utility" has the same meaning as the term "public utility" which is defined in G.S. 62-3(23), and also includes a city or county that provides any of the services listed in G.S. 160A-311 or G.S. 153A-274, an authority organized under the North Carolina Water and Sewer Authorities Act, or an electric or telephone membership corporation. (2016-23, s. 11(a).)

§ 62-6: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-7: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-8: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-9: Reserved for future codification purposes.

Article 2.

Organization of Utilities Commission.

§ 62-10. Number; appointment; terms; qualifications; chairman; vacancies; compensation; other employment prohibited.

(a) The North Carolina Utilities Commission shall consist of five commissioners who shall be appointed as follows: two by the Governor, one by the State Treasurer, one by the General Assembly, upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives in accordance with G.S. 120-121, and one by the General Assembly, upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate in accordance with G.S. 120-121. Each commissioner shall serve for a term of six years commencing on July 1 of the year in which the predecessor term expired and ending on June 30 of the sixth year thereafter. Commissioners appointed by the Governor and Treasurer are subject to confirmation by the General Assembly by joint resolution. The names of commissioners to be appointed by the Governor and Treasurer shall be submitted by the Governor and Treasurer to the General Assembly for confirmation by the General Assembly on or before May 1, of the year in which the terms for which the appointments are to be made are to expire. Upon failure of the Governor or Treasurer to submit names as herein provided, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives jointly shall submit the names of a like number of commissioners to the General Assembly on or before May 15 of the same year for confirmation by the General Assembly. Regardless of the way in which names of commissioners are submitted, confirmation of commissioners must be accomplished prior to adjournment of the then current session of the General Assembly.

(b) Repealed by Session Laws 2023-136, s. 10.1(a), effective October 10, 2023.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 2023-136, s. 10.1(a), effective October 10, 2023.

(d) A commissioner in office shall continue to serve until his successor is duly confirmed and qualified but such holdover shall not affect the expiration date of such succeeding term.

(e) On July 1, 1965, and every three years thereafter, one of the commissioners shall be elected by and from the members of the Commission to serve as chairman of the Commission for the succeeding three years and until his or her successor is duly confirmed and qualifies. Upon death or resignation of the commissioner appointed as chairman, the chairman shall be elected by and from the remaining commissioners.

(f) In case of death, incapacity, resignation or vacancy for any other reason in the office of any commissioner appointed by the Governor prior to the expiration of the commissioner's term of office, the name of the successor shall be submitted to the General Assembly by the Governor within four weeks after the vacancy arises for confirmation by the General Assembly. Upon failure of the Governor to submit the name of the successor, the President Pro Tempore and Speaker of the House jointly shall submit the name of a successor to the General Assembly within six weeks after the vacancy arises. Regardless of the way in which names of commissioners are submitted, confirmation of commissioners must be accomplished prior to the adjournment of the then current session of the General Assembly. In case of death, incapacity, resignation, or vacancy for any other reason in the office of any commissioner appointed by the General Assembly prior to the expiration of the commissioner's term of office, the vacancy shall be filled as provided in G.S. 120-122. In case of death, incapacity, resignation, or vacancy for any other reason in the office of the commissioner appointed by the State Treasurer prior to the expiration of the commissioner's term of office, the vacancy shall be filled by the State Treasurer.

(g) If a vacancy arises or exists pursuant to either subsection (a) or (f) of this section when the General Assembly is not in session, and the appointment is deemed urgent by the Governor, the commissioner may be appointed and serve on an interim basis pending confirmation by the General Assembly; provided, however, no person may be appointed to serve on an interim basis pending confirmation by the General Assembly if the person was subject to but not confirmed by the General Assembly within the preceding four years. The limitation on appointment contained in this subsection includes, among other things, unfavorable action on a joint resolution for confirmation, such as the resolution failing on any reading in either chamber of the General Assembly, and failure to ratify a joint resolution for confirmation prior to adjournment of the then current session of the General Assembly.

(h) The salary of each commissioner and that of the commissioner designated as chairman shall be set by the General Assembly in the Current Operations Appropriations Act. In lieu of merit and other increment raises paid to regular State employees, each commissioner, including the commissioner designated as chairman, shall receive as longevity pay an amount equal to four and eight-tenths percent (4.8%) of the annual salary set forth in the Current Operations Appropriations Act payable monthly after five years of service, and nine and six-tenths percent (9.6%) after 10 years of service. "Service" means service as a member of the Utilities Commission.

(h1) In addition to compensation for their services, each member of the Commission who lives at least 50 miles from the City of Raleigh shall be paid a weekly travel allowance for each week the member travels to the City of Raleigh from the member's home for business of the Commission. The allowance shall be calculated for each member by multiplying the actual round-trip mileage from that member's home to the City of Raleigh by the rate-per-mile which is the business standard mileage rate set by the Internal Revenue Service in Rev. Proc. 93-51, December 27, 1993.

(i) The standards of judicial conduct provided for judges in Article 30 of Chapter 7A of the General Statutes shall apply to members of the Commission. Members of the Commission shall be liable to impeachment for the causes and in the manner provided for judges of the General Court of

Justice in Chapter 123 of the General Statutes. Members of the Commission shall not engage in any other employment, business, profession, or vocation while in office.

(j) Except as provided in subsection (h1) of this section, members of the Commission shall be reimbursed for travel and subsistence expenses at the rates allowed to State officers and employees by G.S. 138-6(a). (1941, c. 97, s. 2; 1949, c. 1009, s. 1; 1959, c. 1319; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1967, c. 1238; 1975, c. 243, s. 3; c. 867, ss. 1, 2; 1977, c. 468, s. 1; c. 913, s. 2; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1116, s. 91; 1989, c. 781, s. 41.2; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 769, s. 7.4(b); 1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18, s. 28.2(b); 1997-443, s. 33.5; 1999-237, s. 28.21(a), (b); 2011-145, s. 14.8A(a); 2018-114, s. 23(a); 2023-136, s. 10.1(a); 2024-57, s. 3F.1(a).)

§ 62-11. Oath of office.

Each utilities commissioner before entering upon the duties of his office shall file with the Secretary of State his oath of office to support the Constitution and laws of the United States and the Constitution and laws of the State of North Carolina, and to well and truly perform the duties of his said office as utilities commissioner, and that he is not the agent or attorney of any public utility, or an employee thereof, and that he has no interest in any public utility. (1933, c. 134, s. 5; 1935, c. 280; 1939, c. 404; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-12. Organization of Commission; adoption of rules and regulations therefor.

To facilitate the work of the Commission and for administrative purposes, the chairman of the Commission, with the consent and approval of the Commission, may organize the work of the Commission in several hearing divisions and operating departments and may designate a member of the Commission as the head of any division or divisions and assign to members of the Commission various duties in connection therewith. Subject to the provisions of the North Carolina Human Resources Act (Article 2 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes), the Commission shall prepare and adopt rules and regulations governing the personnel, departments or divisions and all internal affairs and business of the Commission. (1941, c. 97, s. 3; 1949, c. 1009, s. 2; 1957, c. 1062, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 2013-382, s. 9.1(c).)

§ 62-13. Chairman to direct Commission.

(a) The chairman shall be the chief executive and administrative officer of the Commission.

(b) The chairman shall determine whether matters pending before the Commission shall be considered or heard initially by the full Commission, a panel of three commissioners, a hearing commissioner, or a hearing examiner. Subject to the rules of the Commission, the chairman shall assign members of the Commission to proceedings and shall assign members to preside at proceedings before the full Commission or a panel of three commissioners.

(c) The chairman, the presiding commissioner, hearing commissioner, or hearing examiner shall hear and determine procedural motions or petitions not determinative of the merits of the proceedings and made prior to hearing; and at hearing shall make all rulings on motions and objections.

(d) The chairman acting alone, or any three commissioners, may initiate investigations, complaints, or any other proceedings within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (1941, c. 97, s. 4; 1957, c. 1062, s. 2; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1975, c. 243, ss. 9, 10; 1977, c. 468, s. 2; c. 913, s. 2.)

§ 62-14. Commission staff; structure and function.

(a) The Commission is authorized and empowered to employ hearing examiners; court reporters; a chief clerk and deputy clerk; a commission attorney and assistant commission attorney; transportation and pipeline safety inspectors; and such other professional, administrative, technical, and clerical personnel as the Commission may determine to be necessary in the proper discharge of the Commission's duty and responsibility as provided by law. The chairman shall organize and direct the work of the Commission staff.

(b) The salaries and compensation of all such personnel shall be fixed in the manner provided by law for fixing and regulating salaries and compensation by other State agencies, except that the Commission and its employees are exempt from the classification and compensation rules established by the State Human Resources Commission pursuant to G.S. 126-4(1) through (4); G.S. 126-4(5) only as it applies to hours and days of work, vacation, and sick leave; G.S. 126-4(6) only as it applies to promotion and transfer; G.S. 126-4(10) only as it applies to the prohibition of the establishment of incentive pay programs; and Article 2 of Chapter 126 of the General Statutes, except for G.S. 126-7.1.

(c) The chairman, within allowed budgetary limits and as allowed by law, shall authorize and approve travel, subsistence and related expenses of such personnel, incurred while traveling on official business. (1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1977, c. 468, s. 3; 2023-134, s. 11.16(a); 2023-138, s. 6(a).)

§ 62-15. Office of executive director; Public Staff, structure and function.

(a) There is established in the Commission the office of executive director, whose salary and longevity pay shall be the same as that fixed for members of the Commission. "Service" for purposes of longevity pay means service as executive director of the Public Staff. The executive director shall be appointed by the Governor subject to confirmation by the General Assembly by joint resolution. The name of the executive director appointed by the Governor shall be submitted to the General Assembly on or before May 1 of the year in which the term of his office begins. The term of office for the executive director shall be six years, and the initial term shall begin July 1, 1977. The executive director may be removed from office by the Governor in the event of his incapacity to serve; and the executive director shall be removed from office by the Governor upon the affirmative recommendation of a majority of the Commission, after consultation with the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources, the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Natural, and Economic Resources, and the chairs of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources of the General Assembly. In case of a vacancy in the office of executive director for any reason prior to the expiration of his term of office, the name of his successor shall be submitted by the Governor to the General Assembly, not later than four weeks after the vacancy arises. If a vacancy arises in the office when the General Assembly is not in session, the executive director shall be appointed by the Governor to serve on an interim basis pending confirmation by the General Assembly.

(b) There is established in the Commission a Public Staff. The Public Staff shall consist of the executive director and such other professional, administrative, technical, and clerical personnel as may be necessary in order for the Public Staff to represent the using and consuming public, as hereinafter provided. All such personnel shall be hired, supervised, and directed by the executive director, as provided by law. The Public Staff shall not be subject to the supervision, direction, or control of the Commission, the chairman, or members of the Commission.

(c) Except for the executive director, the salaries and compensation of all such personnel shall be fixed in the manner provided by law for fixing and regulating salaries and compensation by

other State agencies, except that the Public Staff and its employees are exempt from the classification and compensation rules established by the State Human Resources Commission pursuant to G.S. 126-4(1) through (4); G.S. 126-4(5) only as it applies to hours and days of work, vacation, and sick leave; G.S. 126-4(6) only as it applies to promotion and transfer; G.S. 126-4(10) only as it applies to the prohibition of the establishment of incentive pay programs; and Article 2 of Chapter 126 of the General Statutes, except for G.S. 126-7.1.

(d) It shall be the duty and responsibility of the Public Staff to:

(1) Review, investigate, and make appropriate recommendations to the Commission with respect to the reasonableness of rates charged or proposed to be charged by any public utility and with respect to the consistency of such rates with the public policy of assuring an energy supply adequate to protect the public health and safety and to promote the general welfare;

(2) Review, investigate, and make appropriate recommendations to the Commission with respect to the service furnished, or proposed to be furnished by any public utility;

(3) Intervene on behalf of the using and consuming public, in all Commission proceedings affecting the rates or service of any public utility;

(4) When deemed necessary by the executive director in the interest of the using and consuming public, petition the Commission to initiate proceedings to review, investigate, and take appropriate action with respect to the rates, operations, or service of public utilities;

(5) Intervene on behalf of the using and consuming public in all certificate applications filed pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 62-110.1, and provide assistance to the Commission in making the analysis and plans required pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 62-110.1 and 62-155;

(6) Intervene on behalf of the using and consuming public in all proceedings wherein any public utility proposes to reduce or abandon service to the public;

(7) Investigate complaints affecting the using and consuming public generally which are directed to the Commission, members of the Commission, or the Public Staff and where appropriate make recommendations to the Commission with respect to such complaints;

(8) Make studies and recommendations to the Commission with respect to standards, regulations, practices, or service of any public utility pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 62-43; provided, however, that the Public Staff shall have no duty, responsibility, or authority with respect to the enforcement of natural gas pipeline safety laws, rules, or regulations;

(9) When deemed necessary by the executive director, in the interest of the using and consuming public, intervene in Commission proceedings with respect to transfers of franchises, mergers, consolidations, and combinations of public utilities pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 62-111;

(10) Repealed by Session Laws 2021-23, s. 3, effective May 17, 2021.

(11) Review, investigate, and make appropriate recommendations to the Commission with respect to contracts of public utilities with affiliates or subsidiaries, pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 62-153;

(12) When deemed necessary by the executive director, in the interest of the using and consuming public, advise the Commission with respect to securities,

regulations, and transactions, pursuant to the provisions of Article 8 of this Chapter.

(13) When deemed necessary by the executive director in the interest of the using and consuming public, appear before State and federal courts and agencies in matters affecting public utility service.

(e) The Public Staff shall have no duty, responsibility, or authority with respect to the laws, rules or regulations pertaining to the physical facilities or equipment of common, contract and exempt carriers, the registration of vehicles or of insurance coverage of vehicles of common, contract and exempt carriers; the licensing, training, or qualifications of drivers or other persons employed by common, contract and exempt carriers, or the operation of motor vehicle equipment by common, contract and exempt carriers in the State.

(f) The executive director representing the Public Staff shall have the same rights of appeal from Commission orders or decisions as other parties to Commission proceedings.

(g) Upon request, the executive director shall employ the resources of the Public Staff to furnish to the Commission or its members such information and reports or conduct such investigations and provide such other assistance as may reasonably be required in order to supervise and control the public utilities of the State as may be necessary to carry out the laws providing for their regulation.

(h) The executive director is authorized to employ, subject to approval by the State Budget Officer, expert witnesses and such other professional expertise as the executive director may deem necessary from time to time to assist the Public Staff in its participation in Commission proceedings, and the compensation and expenses therefor shall be paid by the utility or utilities participating in said proceedings. Such compensation and expenses shall be treated by the Commission, for ratemaking purposes, in a manner generally consistent with its treatment of similar expenditures incurred by utilities in the presentation of their cases before the Commission. An accounting of such compensation and expenses shall be reported annually to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources, the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Natural, and Economic Resources, and the chairs of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

(i) The executive director, within established budgetary limits, and as allowed by law, shall authorize and approve travel, subsistence, and related necessary expenses of the executive director or members of the Public Staff, incurred while traveling on official business. (1949, c. 1009, s. 3; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1977, c. 468, s. 4; 1981, c. 475; 1983, c. 717, s. 12.1; 1985, c. 499, s. 4; 1989, c. 781, s. 41.3; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1024, s. 13; 1999-237, s. 28.21A; 2011-291, ss. 2.8, 2.9; 2017-57, s. 14.1(p); 2021-23, ss. 3, 24, 25; 2023-134, s. 11.16(b); 2023-138, s. 6(b); 2024-57, s. 3D.1(c).)

§ 62-16. Repealed by Session Laws 1977, c. 468, s. 5.

§ 62-17. Annual reports; monthly or quarterly release of certain information; publication of procedural orders and decisions.

(a) It shall be the duty of the Commission to make and publish annual reports to the Governor of Commission activities, including copies of its general orders and regulations, comparative statistical data on the operation of the various public utilities in the State, comparisons

of rates in North Carolina with rates elsewhere, a detailed report of its investigative division, a review of significant developments in the fields of utility law, economics and planning, a report of pending matters before the Commission, and a digest of the principal decisions of the Commission and the North Carolina courts affecting public utilities. A monthly or quarterly release of such information shall be made if the Commission deems it advisable or if the Governor shall so request.

(a1) The Public Staff of the Commission shall make and publish annual reports to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources, the chairs of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Natural, and Economic Resources, and the chairs of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources on its activities in the interest of the using and consuming public.

(b) The Commission shall publish in a separate volume at least once each year its final decisions made on the merits in formal proceedings before the Commission, and may include significant procedural orders and decisions. (1899, c. 164, s. 27; Rev., s. 1117; 1911, c. 211, s. 9; 1913, c. 10, s. 1; C.S., s. 1065; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1955, c. 981; 1957, c. 1152, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1977, c. 468, s. 6; 2017-57, s. 14.1(o); 2021-23, s. 24.)

§ 62-18. Records of receipts and disbursements; payment into treasury.

(a) The Commission shall keep a record showing in detail all receipts and disbursements.

(b) Except as provided in G.S. 62-110.3, all license fees and seal taxes, all money received from fines and penalties, and all other fees paid into the office of the Utilities Commission shall be turned in to the State treasury. (1899, c. 164, ss. 26, 33, 34; Rev., ss. 1114, 1115; C.S., ss. 1063, 1064; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1987, c. 490, s. 1.)

§ 62-19. Public record of proceedings; chief clerk; seal.

(a) The Commission shall keep in the office of the chief clerk at all times a record of its official acts, rulings, orders, decisions, and transactions, and a current calendar of its scheduled activities and hearings, which shall be public records of the State of North Carolina.

(b) Upon receipt by the Commission, the chief clerk shall furnish to the executive director copies of all rates, tariffs, contracts, applications, petitions, pleadings, complaints, and all other documents filed with the Commission and shall furnish to the executive director copies of all orders and decisions entered by the Commission.

(c) The Commission shall have and adopt a seal with the words "North Carolina Utilities Commission" and such other design as it may prescribe engraved thereon by which it shall authenticate its proceedings and of which the courts shall take judicial notice. Where an exemplified copy of Commission records and proceedings is required for full faith and credit outside of the State, such records and proceedings shall be attested by the chief clerk, or deputy clerk, and the seal of the Commission annexed, and there shall be affixed a certificate of a member of the Commission that the said attestation is in proper form. Such exemplification shall constitute an authenticated or exemplified copy of an official record of a court of record of the State of North Carolina. (1933, c. 134, ss. 13, 15; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1977, c. 468, s. 7.)

§ 62-20. Repealed by Session Laws 2024-57, s. 3D.1(b), effective December 11, 2024.

§ 62-21. Repealed by Session Laws 1977, c. 468, s. 9.

§ 62-22. Utilities Commission and Department of Revenue to coordinate facilities for ratemaking and taxation purposes.

The Commission, at the request of the Department of Revenue, shall make available to the Department of Revenue the services of such of the personnel of the Commission as may be desired and required for the purpose of furnishing to the Department of Revenue advice and information as to the value of properties of public utilities, the valuations of which for ad valorem taxation are required by law to be determined by the Department of Revenue. It shall be the duty of the Commission and the Department of Revenue, with regard to the assessment and valuation of properties of public utilities doing business in North Carolina, to coordinate the activities of said agencies so that each of them shall receive the benefit of the exchange of information gathered by them with respect to the valuations of public utilities property for ratemaking and taxation purposes, and the facilities of each of said agencies shall be made fully available to both of them. (1949, c. 1029, s. 3; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1973, c. 476, s. 193; 2021-23, s. 25.)

§ 62-23. Commission as an administrative board or agency.

The Commission is hereby declared to be an administrative board or agency of the General Assembly created for the principal purpose of carrying out the administration and enforcement of this Chapter, and for the promulgation of rules and regulations and fixing utility rates pursuant to such administration; and in carrying out such purpose, the Commission shall assume the initiative in performing its duties and responsibilities in securing to the people of the State an efficient and economic system of public utilities in the same manner as commissions and administrative boards generally. In proceedings in which the Commission is exercising functions judicial in nature, it shall act in a judicial capacity as provided in G.S. 62-60. The Commission shall separate its administrative or executive functions, its rulemaking functions, and its functions judicial in nature to such extent as it deems practical and advisable in the public interest. (1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 2025-25, s. 29(6).)

§§ 62-24 through 62-29. Reserved for future codification purposes.

Article 3.

Powers and Duties of Utilities Commission.

§ 62-30. General powers of Commission.

The Commission shall have and exercise such general power and authority to supervise and control the public utilities of the State as may be necessary to carry out the laws providing for their regulation, and all such other powers and duties as may be necessary or incident to the proper discharge of its duties. (1933, c. 134, s. 2; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-30.1. Designating telecommunications carriers; rules.

(a) Notwithstanding G.S. 62-3(23)j. or G.S. 62-30, the Utilities Commission may, solely upon petition of any provider or reseller of mobile radio communications service, designate the petitioning provider or reseller of mobile radio communications service as an eligible telecommunications carrier pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 54.201 for purposes of providing Lifeline service. The Commission may adopt rules to effectuate the purposes of this section.

(b) Nothing in this section shall confer upon the Utilities Commission any regulatory jurisdiction over providers or resellers of mobile radio communications service that have been

previously designated as eligible telecommunications carriers for purposes of providing Lifeline service prior to the enactment of this section." (2025-89, s. 4.5.)

§ 62-31. Power to make and enforce rules and regulations for public utilities.

The Commission shall have and exercise full power and authority to administer and enforce the provisions of this Chapter, and to make and enforce reasonable and necessary rules and regulations to that end. (1907, c. 469, s. 1a; 1913, c. 127, s. 2; C.S., s. 1037; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1947, c. 1008, s. 2; 1949, c. 1132, s. 3; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-32. Supervisory powers; rates and service.

(a) Under the rules herein prescribed and subject to the limitations hereinafter set forth, the Commission shall have general supervision over the rates charged and service rendered by all public utilities in this State.

(b) Except as provided in this Chapter for bus companies, the Commission is hereby vested with all power necessary to require and compel any public utility to provide and furnish to the citizens of this State reasonable service of the kind it undertakes to furnish and fix and regulate the reasonable rates and charges to be made for such service. (1913, c. 127, s. 7; C.S., s. 1112(b); 1933, c. 134, s. 3; 1937, c. 108, s. 2; 1941, cc. 59, 97; 1959, c. 639, s. 12; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1985, c. 676, s. 5.)

§ 62-33. Commission to keep informed as to utilities.

The Commission shall at all times keep informed as to the public utilities, their rates and charges for service, and the service supplied and the purposes for which it is supplied. (1933, c. 134, s. 16; 1937, c. 165; 1939, c. 365, ss. 1, 2; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-34. To investigate companies under its control; visitation and inspection.

(a) The Commission shall from time to time visit the places of business and investigate the books and papers of all public utilities to ascertain if all the orders, rules and regulations of the Commission have been complied with, and shall have full power and authority to examine all officers, agents and employees of such public utilities, and all other persons, under oath or otherwise, and to compel the production of papers and the attendance of witnesses to obtain the information necessary for carrying into effect and otherwise enforcing the provisions of this Chapter.

(b) Members of the Commission, Commission staff, and Public Staff may during all reasonable hours enter upon any premises occupied by any public utility, for the purpose of making the examinations and tests and exercising any power provided for in this Article, and may set up and use on such premises any apparatus and appliances necessary therefor. Such public utility shall have the right to be represented at the making of such examinations, tests and inspections.

(c) The Public Staff shall have the right to examine confidential information as defined in G.S. 132-1.2 in exercising any power or performing any duty authorized by this Chapter. The Public Staff shall not disclose confidential information except as authorized by (i) the person or entity having the right to assert confidentiality, (ii) the Commission, or (iii) a court of competent jurisdiction. Any information not designated in writing as confidential by the person or entity disclosing it to the Public Staff is subject to disclosure. Any dispute about whether information has been properly designated as confidential shall be determined by the Commission upon motion and response of interested parties. Information shall be considered confidential only to the extent

provided by law. (1899, c. 164, s. 1; Rev., s. 1064; 1913, c. 127, ss. 1, 2, 7; 1917, c. 194; C.S., s. 1060; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; c. 307, s. 14; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1977, c. 468, s. 10; 2021-23, ss. 5, 24.)

§ 62-35. System of accounts.

(a) The Commission may establish a system of accounts to be kept by the public utilities under its jurisdiction, or may classify said public utilities and establish a system of accounts for each class, and prescribe the manner of keeping such accounts.

(b) The Commission may require any public utility under its jurisdiction to keep separate or allocate the revenue from and the cost of doing interstate and intrastate business in North Carolina.

(c) The Commission may ascertain, determine, and prescribe what are proper and adequate charges for depreciation of the several classes of property for each public utility. The Commission may prescribe such changes in such charges for depreciation as it finds necessary. (Ex. Sess. 1913, c. 20, s. 14; C.S., s. 1088; 1931, c. 455; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; c. 307, s. 13; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-36. Reports by utilities; canceling certificates for failure to file.

The Commission may require any public utility to file annual reports in such form and of such content as the Commission may require and special reports concerning any matter about which the Commission is authorized to inquire or to keep informed, or which it is required to enforce. All reports shall be under oath when required by the Commission. The Commission may issue an order, without notice or hearing, canceling or suspending any certificate of convenience and necessity or any certificate of authority 30 days after the date of service of the order for failing to file the required annual report at the time it was due. In the event the report is filed during the 30-day period, the order of cancellation or suspension shall be null and void. (1931, c. 455; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; c. 307, s. 15; 1941, c. 97; 1959, c. 639, ss. 7, 8; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1985, c. 676, s. 6.)

§ 62-36A: Repealed by Session Laws 2014-120, s. 10(a), effective September 18, 2014.

§ 62-36B: Recodified as G.S. 62-36.01 by Session Laws 2015-264, s. 10, effective October 1, 2015.

§ 62-36.01. Regulation of natural gas service agreements.

Whenever the Commission, after notice and hearing, finds that additional natural gas service agreements (including "backhaul" agreements) with interstate or intrastate pipelines will provide increased competition in North Carolina's natural gas industry and (i) will likely result in lower costs to consumers without substantially increasing the risks of service interruptions to customers, or (ii) will substantially reduce the risks of service interruptions without unduly increasing costs to consumers, the Commission may enter and serve an order directing the franchised natural gas local distribution company to negotiate in good faith to enter into such service agreements within a reasonable time. In considering costs to consumers under this section, the Commission may consider both short-term and long-term costs. (1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 962, s. 5; 2015-264, s. 10.)

§ 62-36.1: Repealed by Session Laws 2014-120, s. 10(a), effective September 18, 2014.

§ 62-37. Investigations.

(a) The Commission may, on its own motion and whenever it may be necessary in the performance of its duties, investigate and examine the condition and management of public utilities or of any particular public utility. In conducting such investigation the Commission may proceed either with or without a hearing as it may deem best, but shall make no order without affording the parties affected thereby notice and hearing.

(b) If after such an investigation, or investigation and hearing, the Commission, in its discretion, is of the opinion that the public interest shall be served by an appraisal of any properties in question, the investigation of any particular construction, the audit of any accounts or books, the investigation of any contracts, or the practices, contracts or other relations between the public utility in question and any holding or finance agency with which such public utility may be affiliated, it shall be the duty of the Commission to report its findings and recommendation to the Governor and Council of State with request for an allotment from the Contingency and Emergency Fund to defray the expense thereof, which may be granted as provided by law for expenditures from such fund or may be denied. Provided, however, that the Commission is authorized to order any such appraisal, investigations, or audit to be undertaken by a competent, qualified, and independent firm selected by the Commission, the cost of such appraisal, investigation or audit to be borne by the public utility in question. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Chapter, the Commission is authorized to initiate a full and complete management audit of any public utility company once every five years, by a competent, qualified, and independent firm, such audit to thoroughly examine the efficiency and effectiveness of management decisions among other factors as directed by the Commission. The cost of such audit is to be borne by the particular public utility subject to the audit; provided, however, that carriers subject to regulation by and auditing of the Interstate Commerce Commission shall not be required to bear the expense of additional audit of accounts or management audit required hereunder. (1931, c. 455; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; c. 307, s. 16; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1975, c. 867, s. 4.)

§ 62-38. Power to regulate public utilities in municipalities.

The Commission shall have the same power and authority to regulate the operation of privately owned public utilities within municipalities as it has to regulate such public utilities operating outside of municipalities, with the exception of the rights of such municipalities to grant franchises for such operation under G.S. 160A-319, and such public utilities shall be subject to the provisions of this Chapter in the same manner as public utilities operating outside municipalities. (1917, c. 136, subch. 3, s. 3; C.S., ss. 2783, 2784, 2785; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1989, c. 770, s. 11.)

§ 62-39. To regulate crossings of telephone, telegraph, electric power lines and pipelines and rights-of-way of railroads and other utilities by another utility.

(a) The Commission, upon its own motion or upon petition of any public utility or upon petition of the North Carolina Rural Electrification Authority on behalf of any electric membership corporation, shall have the power and authority, after notice and hearing, to order that the lines and right-of-way of any public utility or electric membership corporation may be crossed by any other public utility or electric membership corporation. The Commission, in all such cases, may require any such crossings to be constructed and maintained in a safe manner and in accord with accepted

and approved standards of safety and may prescribe the manner in which such construction shall be done.

(b) The Commission shall also have the power and authority to discontinue and prohibit such crossings where they are unnecessary and can reasonably be avoided and to order changes in existing crossings when deemed necessary.

(c) In all cases in which the Commission orders such crossings to be made or changed and when the parties affected cannot agree upon the cost of the construction of such crossings or the damages to be paid to one of the parties for the privilege of crossing the lines of such party, it shall be the duty of the Commission to apportion the cost of such construction and to fix the damage, if any, to be paid and to apportion the damages, if any, among the parties in such manner as may be just and equitable.

(d) This section shall not be construed to limit the right of eminent domain conferred upon public utilities and electric membership corporations by the laws of this State or to limit the right and duty conferred by law with respect to crossing of railroads and highways, but the duty imposed and the remedy given by this section shall be in addition to other duties and remedies now prescribed by law. Any party shall have the right of appeal from any final order or decision or determination of the Commission as provided by law for appeals from orders or decisions or final determinations of the Commission. (1913, c. 130, s. 1; C.S., s. 1052; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1949, c. 1029, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 2021-23, s. 6.)

§ 62-40. To hear and determine controversies submitted.

When a public utility embraced in this Chapter has a controversy with another person and all the parties to such controversy agree in writing to submit such controversy to the Commission as arbitrator, the Commission shall act as such, and after due notice to all parties interested shall proceed to hear the same, and its award shall be final. Such award in cases where land or an interest in land is concerned shall immediately be certified to the clerk of the superior court of the county or counties in which said land, or any part thereof, is situated, and shall by such clerk be docketed in the judgment docket for such county, and from such docketing shall have the same effect as a judgment of the superior court for such county. Parties may appear in person or by attorney before such arbitrator. (1899, c. 164, s. 25; Rev., s. 1073; C.S., s. 1059; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-41. To investigate accidents involving public utilities; to promote general safety program.

The Commission may conduct a program of accident prevention and public safety covering all public utilities with special emphasis on highway safety and transport safety and may investigate the causes of any accident on a highway involving a public utility. Any information obtained upon such investigation shall be reduced to writing and a report thereof filed in the office of the Commission, which shall be subject to public inspection but such report shall not be admissible in evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding arising from such accident. The Commission may adopt reasonable rules and regulations for the safety of the public as affected by public utilities and the safety of public utility employees. The Commission shall cooperate with and coordinate its activities for public utilities with similar programs of the Division of Motor Vehicles, the Insurance Department, the Industrial Commission and other organizations engaged in the promotion of highway safety and employee safety. (1899, c. 164, s. 24; Rev., s. 1065; C.S., s. 1061; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1975, c. 716, s. 5; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 673, s. 2.)

§ 62-42. Compelling efficient service, extensions of services and facilities, additions and improvements.

(a) Except as otherwise limited in this Chapter, whenever the Commission, after notice and hearing had upon its own motion or upon complaint, finds:

(1) That the service of any public utility is inadequate, insufficient or unreasonably discriminatory, or

(2) That persons are not served who may reasonably be served, or

(3) That additions, extensions, repairs or improvements to, or changes in, the existing plant, equipment, apparatus, facilities or other physical property of any public utility, of any two or more public utilities ought reasonably to be made, or

(4) That it is reasonable and proper that new structures should be erected to promote the security or convenience or safety of its patrons, employees and the public, or

(5) That any other act is necessary to secure reasonably adequate service or facilities and reasonably and adequately to serve the public convenience and necessity, the Commission shall enter and serve an order directing that such additions, extensions, repairs, improvements, or additional services or changes shall be made or affected within a reasonable time prescribed in the order. This section shall not apply to terminal or terminal facilities of motor carriers of property.

(b) If such order is directed to two or more public utilities, the utilities so designated shall be given such reasonable time as the Commission may grant within which to agree upon the portion or division of the cost of such additions, extensions, repairs, improvements or changes which each shall bear. If at the expiration of the time limited in the order of the Commission, the utility or utilities named in the order shall fail to file with the Commission a statement that an agreement has been made for division or apportionment of the cost or expense, the Commission shall have the authority, after further hearing in the same proceeding, to make an order fixing the portion of such cost or expense to be borne by each public utility affected and the manner in which the same shall be paid or secured.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 2013-187, s. 1, effective July 1, 2013. (1933, c. 307, s. 10; 1949, c. 1029, s. 2; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1965, c. 287, s. 6; 1985, c. 676, s. 7; 2013-187, s. 1.)

§ 62-43. Fixing standards, classifications, etc.; testing service.

(a) The Commission may, after notice and hearing, had upon its own motion or upon complaint, ascertain and fix just and reasonable standards, classifications, regulations, practices, or service to be furnished, imposed, observed or followed by any or all public utilities; ascertain and fix adequate and reasonable standards for the measurement of quantity, quality, pressure, initial voltage or other condition pertaining to the supply of the product, commodity or service furnished or rendered by any and all public utilities; prescribe reasonable regulations for the examination and testing of such product, commodity or service and for the measurement thereof; establish or approve reasonable rules, regulations, specifications and standards to secure the accuracy of all meters and appliances for measurement; and provide for the examination and testing of any and all appliances used for the measurement of any product, commodity or service of any public utility.

(b) The Commission shall fix, establish and promulgate standards of quality and safety for gas furnished by a public utility and prescribe rules and regulations for the enforcement of and

obedience to the same. (1919, c. 32; C.S., s. 1055; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; c. 307, s. 11; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-44. Commission may require continuous telephone lines.

The Commission may, upon its own motion or upon written complaint by any person, after notice and hearing, require any two or more telephone or telegraph utilities to establish and maintain through lines within the State between two or more localities, which cannot be communicated with or reached by the lines of either utility alone, where the lines or wires of such utilities form a continuous line of communication, or could be made to do so by the construction and maintenance of suitable connections or the joint use of equipment, or the transfer of messages at common points. The rate for such service shall be just and reasonable and the Commission shall have power to establish the same, and declare the portion thereof to which each utility affected thereby is entitled and the manner in which the same must be secured and paid. All necessary construction, maintenance and equipment in order to establish such service shall be constructed and maintained in such manner and under such rules, with such divisions of expense and labor, as may be required by the Commission. (1933, c. 307, s. 9; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-45. Determination of cost and value of utility property.

The Commission, after notice and hearing, may ascertain and fix the cost or value, or both, of the whole or any part of the property of any public utility insofar as the same is material to the exercise of the jurisdiction of the Commission, make revaluations from time to time, and ascertain the cost of all new construction, extensions and additions to the property of every public utility. (1933, c. 307, s. 12; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-46. Water gauging stations.

The Commission may require the location, establishment, maintenance and operation of any water gauging station which it finds is needed in the State over and above those required by federal agencies, and the Commission may cooperate with federal and other State agencies as to the location, construction and reports and the results of operation of such station. (1933, c. 307, s. 33; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-47. Reports from municipalities operating own utilities.

Every municipality furnishing gas, electricity or telephone service shall make an annual report to the Commission, verified by the oath of the general manager or superintendent thereof, on the same forms as provided for reports of public utilities, giving the same information as required of public utilities. (1933, c. 307, s. 34; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-48. Appearance before courts and agencies.

(a) The Commission is authorized and empowered to initiate or appear in such proceedings before federal and State courts and agencies as in its opinion may be necessary to secure for the users of public utility service in this State just and reasonable rates and service; provided, however, that the Commission shall not appear in any State appellate court in support of any order or decision of the Commission entered in a proceeding in which a public utility had the burden of proof.

(b) The Commission may, when appearing before federal courts and agencies on behalf of the using and consuming public in matters relating to the wholesale rates and supply of natural gas,

employ, subject to the approval of the Governor, private legal counsel and be reimbursed for any resulting legal fees and costs from past and future refunds received by the North Carolina natural gas distribution companies, and may establish procedures for those natural gas distribution companies to set aside reasonable amounts of those refunds for this purpose. The Commission is also authorized to establish procedures whereby the State may be reimbursed from past and future refunds received by the North Carolina natural gas distribution companies for travel expenses incurred by staff members of the Commission and Public Staff designated to provide assistance to the Commission's private legal counsel in natural gas matters before federal courts and agencies. (1899, c. 164, s. 14; Rev., s. 1110; 1907, c. 469, s. 5; C.S., s. 1075; 1929, c. 235; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1977, c. 468, s. 11; 1985, c. 312, s. 1; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 1014, s. 233.)

§ 62-49. Publication of utilities laws.

The Commission is authorized and directed to secure publication of all North Carolina laws affecting public utilities, together with the Commission rules and regulations, in an annotated edition, and the Commission may adopt rules for distribution of said publication and may republish said laws at such times as may be reasonable and necessary. (1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1967, c. 1133; 2021-23, s. 7.)

§ 62-50. Safety standards for gas pipeline facilities.

(a) The Commission may promulgate and adopt safety standards for the operation of natural gas pipeline facilities in North Carolina. These safety standards shall apply to the pipeline facilities of gas utilities and pipeline carriers under franchise from the Utilities Commission and to pipeline facilities of other gas operators, as defined in subsection (g) of this section. The Commission shall require that all gas operators file with the Commission reports of all accidents occurring in connection with the operation of their gas pipeline facilities located in North Carolina. The Commission may require that all gas operators file with the Commission copies of their construction, operation, and maintenance standards and procedures, and any amendments thereto, and such other information as may be necessary to show compliance with the safety standards promulgated by the Commission. Where the Commission has reason to believe that any gas operator is not in compliance with the Commission's safety standards, the Commission may, after notice and hearing, order that gas operator to take such measures as may be necessary to comply with the standards. The Commission may require all gas operators to furnish engineering reports showing that their pipeline facilities are in safe operating condition and are being operated in conformity with the Commission's safety standards.

(b) The Commission is hereby authorized to enter into agreements with the United States department of Transportation and other federal agencies and with other states or public utilities commissions of other states for the regulation of natural gas pipelines located within the State of North Carolina and upon the execution of such cooperative agreements, the Commission is authorized to utilize Commission personnel for inspection, investigation, and regulation of safety standards for interstate and intrastate natural gas pipelines in North Carolina, and to share in the cost of such regulation with other agencies having duties with respect to the regulation of said natural gas pipelines, and to receive funds from the United States Department of Transportation for such regulation. The Commission may use Commission personnel to inspect and investigate all gas incidents, facilities, and records kept pursuant to the provision of 49 Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 191, 192, and 193, and to cooperate with other state and federal agencies in determining the

probable cause or cause or causes of gas incidents. Any information obtained during an investigation of a gas incident shall be reduced to writing and a report containing that information shall be filed with the Chief Clerk of the Commission and the report shall be subject to public inspection but the report shall not be admissible in evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding arising from the incident.

(c) The Utilities Commission is hereby authorized to enter into cooperative agreements for inspection of all natural gas pipelines of North Carolina to the end that the Utilities Commission may enter into agreements with the United States Department of Transportation or other federal or state agencies to regulate and inspect the safety standards for all natural gas pipelines in the State of North Carolina, including interstate natural gas pipelines.

(d) Any person who violates any provision of this section, or any regulation of the Utilities Commission issued thereunder, shall be subject to a civil penalty for each violation for each day that the violation continues. The maximum penalty for each day of a violation and for all the days of a continuing violation may not exceed the maximum penalties that would apply if the penalties had been imposed under 49 U.S.C. Appx. § 1679a(a) by the Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation. Penalties assessed under this subsection shall be credited to the General Fund as nontax revenue.

(e) Any action for civil penalty or any claim for said penalty may be compromised by the Utilities Commission and settled for an agreed amount. In determining the amount of the penalty imposed in civil action, or the amount agreed upon in compromise, the amount of the penalty shall be considered in relation to the size of the business of the person charged, the gravity of the violation, and the good faith of the person charged in attempting to achieve compliance, after any prior notification of a violation. The amount of the penalty, when finally determined in a civil action, or the amount agreed upon in compromise, may be deducted from any sums owing by the State to the person charged, or may be collected as in the case of any judgment in a civil action in the State courts.

(f) The General Court of Justice of North Carolina is authorized to issue court orders, restraining orders, injunctions and other processes of the court in actions by the Utilities Commission to enforce the provisions of this Chapter relating to gas pipeline safety, and the Commission is authorized to bring actions in said court, including actions for mandatory injunctions, restraining orders, temporary restraining orders, penalties, damages and such other relief as may be necessary to secure compliance with the provisions of this section and regulations of the Commission duly enacted and adopted hereunder relating to gas pipeline safety. This provision is in addition to other powers of the Commission and the courts in relation to the enforcement of provisions of this Chapter in the courts, and shall not limit the present powers of the Commission in bringing actions in the courts for enforcement of other provisions of this Chapter.

(g) For the purpose of this section, "gas operators" include gas utilities and gas pipeline carriers operating under a franchise from the Utilities Commission, municipal corporations operating municipally owned gas distribution systems, regional natural gas districts organized and operated pursuant to Article 28 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, and public housing authorities and any person operating apartment complexes or mobile home parks that distribute or submeter natural gas to their tenants. This section does not confer any other jurisdiction over municipally owned gas distribution systems, regional natural gas districts, public housing authorities or persons operating apartment complexes or mobile home parks. (1967, c. 1134, s. 1; 1969, c. 646; 1971, cc. 549, 1145; 1979, c. 269, s. 1; 1989, c. 481, ss. 1, 2; 1993, c. 189, s. 1; 1997-426, s. 9.)

§ 62-51. To inspect books and records of corporations affiliated with public utilities.

Members of the Commission, Commission staff, and Public Staff are hereby authorized to inspect the books and records of corporations affiliated with public utilities regulated by the Utilities Commission under the provisions of this Chapter, including parent corporations and subsidiaries of parent corporations. This authorization shall extend to all reasonably necessary inspection of all books and records of account and agreements and transactions between public utilities doing business in North Carolina and their affiliated corporations where such records relate either directly or indirectly to the provision of intrastate service by the utility. The right to inspect such books and records shall apply both to books and records in the State of North Carolina and such books and records located outside of the State of North Carolina. If any such affiliated corporation shall refuse to permit such inspection of its books and records and its transactions with public utilities doing business in North Carolina, the Utilities Commission is empowered to order the public utility regulated in North Carolina to show cause why it should not secure from its affiliated corporation such books and records for inspection in North Carolina or why their franchise to operate as a public utility in North Carolina should not be cancelled. (1969, c. 764, s. 1; 1977, c. 468, s. 12; 2021-23, s. 24.)

§ 62-52. Interruption of service.

The Utilities Commission may adopt appropriate rules and regulations which would allow public utilities to temporarily interrupt service when a structure is moved by the owner of such structure (or by a licensed mover authorized and acting on behalf of the owner) over or along public roads or streets and there are public utility facilities in place which would impede the movement of such structure. Such rules and regulations shall require:

(1) The owner to demonstrate that the public health and safety of the utility's customers and that of the general public will not be affected by the interruption of such service,

(2) That the inconvenience to said customers and the general public can be fully anticipated and reduced to a minimum,

(3) The utility cooperate with the owner in furnishing information relative to (1) and (2), and

(4) An initial application fee be paid the utility toward its cost to be incurred in investigating and planning.

Should the owner and the public utility be unable to agree on a practical procedure and/or the direction to follow in overcoming the impeding facilities in order that the public health and safety of the utility's customers and that of the general public will not be affected, then and in such event the owner may petition the Utilities Commission to require the utility to temporarily interrupt its service to its customers by disconnecting the impeding facilities, provided the owner can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Commission that the public health and safety of the utility's customers and that of the general public will not be affected by such interruption of service and that the public utility was unreasonable in the procedure, direction and cost proposed to the owner to overcome the impeding facility.

In any event, the owner of said structure shall reimburse the utility its full cost involved in such disconnection and reconnection including but not limited to planning, engineering, notification and administrative costs, labor, material and equipment. Should the impeding facility be overcome

other than by disconnection, the owner shall nevertheless reimburse the utility its full cost related thereto. (1981 (Reg. Sess., 1982), c. 1186, s. 1.)

§ 62-53. Electric membership corporation subsidiaries.

In addition to any other authority granted to the Commission in this Chapter, the Commission shall have the authority to regulate electric membership corporations as provided in G.S. 117-18.1. (1999-180, s. 4.)

§ 62-54. Notification of opportunity to object to telephone solicitation.

The Commission shall require each local exchange company and each competing local provider certified to do business in North Carolina to notify all telephone subscribers who subscribe to residential service from that company of the provisions of Article 4 of Chapter 75 of the General Statutes and of the federal laws and regulations allowing consumers to object to receiving telephone solicitations. The notification shall be drafted pursuant to G.S. 75-102(m), shall be distributed at least annually, and shall be distributed by one of the following methods: bill insert or bill message, direct mail, or email when the subscriber has affirmatively selected email as a means of notification. The Commission shall also ensure that this information is printed in a clear, conspicuous manner in the consumer information pages of each telephone directory distributed to residential customers. (2000-161, s. 3; 2003-411, s. 5; 2009-122, s. 2; 2025-25, s. 29(1).)

§§ 62-55 through 62-59. Reserved for future codification purposes.

Article 4.

Procedure Before the Commission.

§ 62-60. Commission acting in judicial capacity; administering oaths and hearing evidence; decisions; quorum.

For the purpose of conducting hearings, making decisions and issuing orders, and in formal investigations where a record is made of testimony under oath, the Commission shall be deemed to exercise functions judicial in nature and shall have all the powers and jurisdiction of a court of general jurisdiction as to all subjects over which the Commission has or may hereafter be given jurisdiction by law. The commissioners and members of the Commission's staff designated and assigned as examiners shall have full power to administer oaths and to hear and take evidence. The Commission shall render its decisions upon questions of law and of fact in the same manner as a court of record. A majority of the commissioners shall constitute a quorum, and any order or decision of a majority of the commissioners shall constitute the order or decision of the Commission, except as otherwise provided in this Chapter. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-60.1. Commission to sit in panels of three.

(a) The Utilities Commission shall sit in panels of three commissioners each unless the chairman by order shall set the proceeding for hearing by the full Commission.

(b) Any order or decision made unanimously by a panel of three commissioners shall constitute the order or decision of the Commission, except as otherwise provided in this Chapter; provided, however, that upon motion of any three commissioners not sitting on the panel, made within 10 days of issuance of such order or decision of the panel, with notice to parties of record, the order or decision of the panel shall thereby be stayed and the full Commission shall review the

order or decision of the panel and shall within 30 days of said motion either affirm or modify the order or decision of the panel or remand the matter to the panel for further proceedings; provided that the foregoing shall not limit the right of parties to seek review of such order or decision under G.S. 62-90.

(c) In the event an order or decision of the panel of three is not made unanimously, such order or decision shall be a recommended order only, subject to review by the full Commission, with all commissioners eligible to participate in the final arguments and decision. Review shall take place in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 62-78 and the Commission shall decide the matter in controversy and make appropriate order or decision thereon within 60 days of the date of the recommended order. If within the filing period specified by the panel no exception has been filed by a party, or if the Commission within the same period has not advised the parties that it will conduct a review upon its own motion, the recommended order or decision shall become the final order or decision of the Commission. Nothing in this section shall amend or repeal the provisions of G.S. 62-134.

(d) This section shall become effective July 1, 1975, and shall not affect the utilization of or the procedures outlined for utilization of a hearing commissioner or a hearing examiner as provided for elsewhere in Chapter 62. (1975, c. 243, s. 4; 1977, c. 468, s. 13.)

§ 62-61. Witnesses; production of papers; contempt.

The Commission shall have the same power to compel the attendance of witnesses, require the examination of persons and parties, and compel the production of books and papers, and punish for contempt, as by law is conferred upon the superior courts. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-62. Issuance and service of subpoenas.

All subpoenas for witnesses to appear before the Commission, a division of the Commission or a hearing commissioner or examiner and notice to persons or corporations, shall be issued by the Commission or its chief clerk or a deputy clerk and be directed to any sheriff or other officer authorized by law to serve process issued out of the superior courts, who shall execute the same and make due return thereof as directed therein, under the penalties prescribed by law for a failure to execute and return the process of any court. The Commission shall have the authority to require the applicant for a subpoena for persons and documents to make a reasonable showing that the evidence of such persons or documents will be material and relevant to the issue in the proceeding. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1995, c. 379, s. 14(c).)

§ 62-63. Service of process and notices.

The chief clerk, a deputy clerk, or any authorized agent of the Commission may serve any notice issued by it and his return thereof shall be evidence of said service; and it shall be the duty of the sheriffs and all officers authorized by law to serve process issuing out of the superior courts, to serve any process, subpoenas and notices issued by the Commission, and such officers shall be entitled to the same fees as are prescribed by law for serving similar papers issuing from the superior court. Service of notice of all hearings, investigations and proceedings by the Commission may be made upon any person upon whom a summons may be served in accordance with the provisions governing civil actions in the superior courts of this State, and may be made personally by an authorized agent of the Commission or by mailing in a sealed envelope, registered, with postage prepaid, or by certified mail. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1957, c. 1152, s. 2; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-64. Bonds.

All bonds or undertakings required to be given by any of the provisions of this Chapter shall be payable to the State of North Carolina, and may be sued on as are other undertakings which are payable to the State. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-65. Rules of evidence; judicial notice.

(a) When acting as a court of record, the Commission shall apply the rules of evidence applicable in civil actions in the superior court, insofar as practicable, but no decision or order of the Commission shall be made or entered in any such proceeding unless the same is supported by competent material and substantial evidence upon consideration of the whole record. Oral evidence shall be taken on oath or affirmation. The rules of privilege shall be effective to the same extent that they are now or hereafter recognized in civil actions in the superior court. The Commission may exclude incompetent, irrelevant, immaterial and unduly repetitious or cumulative evidence. All evidence, including records and documents in the possession of the Commission of which it desires to avail itself, shall be made a part of the record in the case by definite reference thereto at the hearing. Any party introducing any document or record in evidence by reference shall bear the expense of all copies required for the record in the event of an appeal from the Commission's order. Every party to a proceeding shall have the right to call and examine witnesses, to introduce exhibits, to cross-examine opposing witnesses on any matter relevant to the issues, to impeach any witness regardless of which party first called such witness to testify and to rebut the evidence against him. If a party does not testify in his own behalf, he may be called and examined as if under cross-examination.

(b) The Commission may take judicial notice of its decisions, the annual reports of public utilities on file with the Commission, published reports of federal regulatory agencies, the decisions of State and federal courts, State and federal statutes, public information and data published by official State and federal agencies and reputable financial reporting services, generally recognized technical and scientific facts within the Commission's specialized knowledge, and such other facts and evidence as may be judicially noticed by justices and judges of the General Court of Justice. When any Commission decision relies upon such judicial notice of material facts not appearing in evidence, it shall be so stated with particularity in such decision and any party shall, upon petition filed within 10 days after service of the decision, be afforded an opportunity to contest the purported facts noticed or show to the contrary in a rehearing set with proper notice to all parties; but the Commission may notify the parties before or during the hearing of facts judicially noticed, and afford at the hearing a reasonable opportunity to contest the purported facts noticed, or show to the contrary. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1959, c. 639, s. 2; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1973, c. 108, s. 21.)

§ 62-66. Depositions.

The Commission or any party to a proceeding may take and use depositions of witnesses in the same manner as provided by law for the taking and use of depositions in civil actions in the superior court. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-67. Repealed by Session Laws 1981, c. 193, s. 1.

§ 62-68. Use of affidavits.

At any time, 10 or more days prior to a hearing or a continued hearing, any party or the Commission may send by registered or certified mail or deliver to the opposing parties a copy of any affidavit proposed to be used in evidence, together with the notice as herein provided. Unless an opposing party or the Commission at least five days prior to the hearing, if the affidavit and notice are received at least 20 days prior to such hearing, otherwise at any time prior to or during such hearing, sends by registered or certified mail or delivers to the proponent a request to cross-examine the affiant at the hearing, the right to cross-examine such affiant is waived and the affidavit, if introduced in evidence, shall be given the same effect as if the affiant had testified orally. If an opportunity to cross-examine an affiant at the hearing is not afforded after request therefor is made as herein provided, the affidavit shall not be received in evidence. The notice accompanying the affidavit shall set forth the name and address of the affiant and shall contain a statement that the affiant will not be called to testify orally and will not be subject to cross-examination unless the opposing parties or the Commission demand the right of cross-examination by notice mailed or delivered to the proponent at least five days prior to the hearing if the notice and affidavit are received at least 20 days prior to such hearing, otherwise at any time prior to or during such hearing. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1957, c. 1152, s. 3; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-69. Stipulations and agreements; prehearing conference.

(a) In all contested proceedings the Commission, by prehearing conferences and in such other manner as it may deem expedient and in the public interest, shall encourage the parties and their counsel to make and enter stipulations of record for the following purposes:

(1) Eliminating the necessity of proof of all facts which may be admitted and the authenticity of documentary evidence,

(2) Facilitating the use of exhibits, and

(3) Clarifying the issues of fact and law.

The Commission may make informal disposition of any contested proceeding by stipulation, agreed settlement, consent order or default.

(b) Unless otherwise provided in the Commission's rules of practice and procedure, such prehearing conferences may be ordered by the Commission or requested by any party to a proceeding in substantially the same manner, and with substantially the same subsequent procedure, as provided by law for the conduct of pretrial hearings in the superior court. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-70. Ex parte communications.

(a) In all matters and proceedings pending on the Commission's formal docket, with adversary parties of record, all communications or contact of any nature whatsoever between any party and the Commission or any of its members, or any hearing examiner assigned to such docket, whether verbal or written, formal or informal, which pertains to the merits of such matter or proceeding, shall be made only with full knowledge of, or notice to, all other parties of record. All parties shall have an opportunity to be informed fully as to the nature of such communication and to be present and heard with respect thereto. In all matters and proceedings which are judicial in nature, it is the specific intent of this section that all members of the Commission shall conduct all trials, hearings and proceedings before them in the manner and in accordance with the judicial standards applicable to judges of the General Court of Justice, as provided in Chapter 7A of the General Statutes, and upon the initiation of any such proceedings, and particularly during the trial or hearing thereof, there shall be no communications or contacts of any nature, including telephone

communications, written correspondence, or direct office conferences, between any party or such party's attorney and any member of the Commission or any hearing examiner, without all other parties to such proceeding having full notice and opportunity to be present and heard with respect to any such contact or communication.

Any commissioner who knowingly receives any such communication or contact during such proceeding and who fails promptly to report the same to the Attorney General, or who otherwise violates any of the provisions of this subsection shall be liable to impeachment. Any examiner who knowingly receives any such communication or contact during such proceeding and who fails promptly to report the same to the Attorney General or who otherwise violates any of the provisions of this subsection shall be subject to dismissal from employment for cause.

(b) In the event any such communication or contact shall be received by the Commission or any commissioner or any hearing examiner assigned to such docket without such knowledge or notice to all other parties, the Commission shall immediately cause a formal record of such violation to be made in its docket and thereafter no ruling or decision shall be made in favor of such violating party until the aggrieved party shall waive such violation or the Commission shall find as a fact that such party was not prejudiced thereby or that any such prejudice, if present, has been removed.

(c) Any contacts or communications made in violation of this section which are not recorded by the Commission may be recorded by notice to the Commission by any aggrieved party and, unless the Commission shall find that such violation did not in fact occur, such recording shall have the same effect as if done by the Commission.

(d) In matters not under this section, the Commission may secure information and receive communications ex parte, it being the purpose of this section to protect adversary interests where they exist but not otherwise to restrict unduly the administrative and legislative functions of the Commission.

(e) This section shall not modify any notice required in the case of pleadings and proceedings which are subject to other requirements of notice to parties of record, whether by statute or by rule of the Commission, and the Commission may adopt reasonable rules to coordinate this section with such other requirements.

(f) In addition to the foregoing provisions regarding contacts with members of the Commission and hearing examiners, if any party of record confers with or otherwise contacts any staff personnel employed by the Commission regarding the merits of a pending proceeding, the staff employee shall promptly forward by regular mail a memorandum of the date and general subject matter of such contact to all other parties of record to the proceeding.

(g) Notwithstanding the foregoing, no communication by a public utility or by the Public Staff regarding the level of rates specifically proposed to be charged by a public utility shall be made or directed to the Commission, a member of the Commission, or hearing examiner, except in the form of written tariff, petition, application, pleading, written response, written recommendation, recorded conference, intervention, answer, pleading, sworn testimony and related exhibits, oral argument on the record, or brief. Willful violations of the provisions of this section on the part of any public utility shall subject such public utility to the penalties provided in G.S. 62-310(a). Willful violations of the provisions of this section by a member of the Public Staff shall subject such person to dismissal for cause. (1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1977, c. 468, s. 14; 1979, c. 332, s. 2; 2021-23, s. 24; 2024-57, s. 3D.1(d).)

§ 62-71. Hearings to be public; record of proceedings.

(a) All formal hearings before the Commission, a panel of three commissioners, a commissioner or an examiner shall be public, and shall be conducted in accordance with such rules as the Commission may prescribe. A full and complete record shall be kept of all proceedings on any formal hearing, and all testimony shall be taken by a reporter appointed by the Commission. Any party to a proceeding shall be entitled to a copy of the record or any part thereof upon the payment of the reasonable cost thereof as determined by the Commission.

(b) The Commission in its discretion may approve stenographic or mechanical methods of recording testimony, or a combination of such methods, and a transcript of any such record shall be valid for all purposes, subject to protest and settlement by the Commission.

(c) The Commission is authorized to provide daily transcripts of testimony in cases of substantial public interest and in other cases where time is an important factor to the parties involved.

(d) The Commission shall have authority to contract with or employ on a temporary basis, when deemed necessary by the chairman of the Commission, court reporters in addition to those employed on a full-time basis by the Commission, for the purpose of recording and transcribing testimony given at hearings before the Commission involving any Class A or B utility. The Commission is authorized to charge the cost of employing such court reporters directly to the involved utility or utilities. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1975, c. 243, s. 9; 1981, c. 1022.)

§ 62-72. Commission may make rules of practice and procedure.

Except as otherwise provided in this Chapter, the Commission is authorized to make and promulgate rules of practice and procedure for the Commission hearings. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-73. Complaints against public utilities.

Complaints may be made by the Commission on its own motion or by any person having an interest, either direct or as a representative of any persons having a direct interest in the subject matter of such complaint by petition or complaint in writing setting forth any act or thing done or omitted to be done by any public utility, including any rule, regulation or rate heretofore established or fixed by or for any public utility in violation of any provision of law or of any order or rule of the Commission, or that any rate, service, classification, rule, regulation or practice is unjust and unreasonable. Upon good cause shown and in compliance with the rules of the Commission, the Commission shall also allow any such person authorized to file a complaint, to intervene in any pending proceeding. The Commission, by rule, may prescribe the form of complaints filed under this section, and may in its discretion order two or more complaints dealing with the same subject matter to be joined in one hearing. Unless the Commission shall determine, upon consideration of the complaint or otherwise, and after notice to the complainant and opportunity to be heard, that no reasonable ground exists for an investigation of such complaint, the Commission shall fix a time and place for hearing, after reasonable notice to the complainant and the utility complained of, which notice shall be not less than 10 days before the time set for such hearing. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-73.1. Complaints against providers of telephone services.

(a) A local exchange company or competing local provider that is unable to resolve a customer complaint shall (i) provide notice to the consumer of the consumer's right to contact the

Public Staff of the Commission and (ii) provide to the consumer, in writing, contact information for the Public Staff, including both a toll-free telephone number and an email address.

(b) The Public Staff shall keep a record of all complaints received pertaining to the provider, including the nature of each complaint and the resolution thereof. If the Public Staff determines that it cannot reasonably resolve the matter, the matter shall be referred to the Commission. The standard for review by both the Public Staff and the Commission shall be whether the action or inaction of the provider is reasonable and appropriate. (2009-238, s. 5; 2025-25, s. 29(1).)

§ 62-74. Complaints by public utilities.

Any public utility shall have the right to file a complaint against any other public utility or any person on any of the grounds upon which complaints are allowed to be filed by other parties, and the same procedure shall be adopted and followed as in other cases, except that the complaint and notice of hearing shall be served by the Commission upon such interested persons as it may designate. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 2021-23, s. 8.)

§ 62-75. Burden of proof.

Except as otherwise limited in this Chapter, in all proceedings instituted by the Commission for the purpose of investigating any rate, service, classification, rule, regulation or practice, the burden of proof shall be upon the public utility whose rate, service, classification, rule, regulation or practice is under investigation to show that the same is just and reasonable. In all other proceedings the burden of proof shall be upon the complainant. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1985, c. 676, s. 8.)

§ 62-76. Hearings by Commission, panel of three commissioners, single commissioner, or examiner.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this Chapter, any matter requiring a hearing shall be heard and decided by the Commission or shall be referred to a panel of three commissioners or one of the commissioners or a qualified member of the Commission staff as examiner for hearing, report and recommendation of an appropriate order or decision thereon. Subject to the limitations prescribed in this Article, a panel of three commissioners, hearing commissioner or examiner to whom a hearing has been referred by order of the chairman shall have all the rights, duties, powers and jurisdiction conferred by this Chapter upon the Commission. The chairman, in his discretion, may direct any hearing by the Commission or any panel, commissioner or examiner to be held in such place or places within the State as he may determine to be in the public interest and as will best serve the convenience of interested parties. Before any member of the Commission staff enters upon the performance of duties as an examiner, he shall first take, subscribe to and file with the Commission an oath similar to the oath required of members of the Commission.

(b) Repealed by Session Laws 1975, c. 243, s. 5.

(c) In all cases in which a pending proceeding shall be assigned to a hearing commissioner, such commissioner shall hear and determine the proceedings and submit his recommended order, but, in the event of a petition to the full Commission to review such recommended order, the hearing commissioner shall take no part in such review, either in hearing oral argument or in consideration of the Commission's decision, but his vote shall be counted in such decision to affirm his original order. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1959, c. 639, s. 3; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1975, c. 243, ss. 5, 9, 10.)

§ 62-77. Recommended decision of panel of three commissioners, single commissioner or examiner.

Any report, order or decision made or recommended by a panel of three commissioners, commissioner or examiner with respect to any matter referred for hearing shall be in writing and shall set forth separately findings of fact and conclusions of law and shall be filed with the Commission. A copy of such recommended order, report and findings shall be served upon the parties who have appeared in the proceeding. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1975, c. 243, s. 9.)

§ 62-78. Proposed findings, briefs, exceptions, orders, expediting cases, and other procedure.

(a) Prior to each decision or order by the Commission in a proceeding initially heard by it and prior to any recommended decision or order of a panel of three commissioners, commissioner or examiner, the parties shall be afforded an opportunity to submit, within the time prescribed by order entered in the cause, unless further extended by order of the Commission, for the consideration of the Commission, panel, commissioner or examiner, as the case may be, proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law and briefs or, in its discretion, oral arguments in lieu thereof.

(b) Within the time prescribed by the panel of three commissioners, commissioner, or examiner, the parties shall be afforded an opportunity to file exceptions to the recommended decision or order and a brief in support thereof, provided the time so fixed shall be not less than 15 days from the date of such recommended decision or order. The record shall show the ruling upon each requested finding and conclusion or exception.

(c) In all proceedings in which a panel of three commissioners, commissioner or examiner has filed a report, recommended decision or order to which exceptions have been filed, the Commission, before making its final decision or order, shall afford the party or parties an opportunity for oral argument. When no exceptions are filed within the time specified to a recommended decision or order, such recommended decision or order shall become the order of the Commission and shall immediately become effective unless the order is stayed or postponed by the Commission; provided, the Commission may, on its own motion, review any such matter and take action thereon as if exceptions thereto had been filed.

(d) When exceptions are filed, as herein provided, it shall be the duty of the Commission to consider the same and if sufficient reason appears therefor, to grant such review or make such order or hold or authorize such further hearing or proceeding as may be necessary or proper to carry out the purposes of this Chapter. The Commission, after review, upon the whole record, or as supplemented by a further hearing, shall decide the matter in controversy and make appropriate order or decision thereon.

(e) The Commission may expedite the hearing and decision of any case if the public interest so requires by the use of pretrial conferences, daily transcripts of evidence, trial briefs, and prompt oral argument, and by granting priority to the hearing and decision of such case. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1959, c. 639, s. 4; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1975, c. 243, ss. 9, 10; c. 867, s. 5.)

§ 62-79. Final orders and decisions; findings; service; compliance.

(a) All final orders and decisions of the Commission shall be sufficient in detail to enable the court on appeal to determine the controverted questions presented in the proceedings and shall include:

(1) Findings and conclusions and the reasons or bases therefor upon all the material issues of fact, law, or discretion presented in the record, and

(2) The appropriate rule, order, sanction, relief or statement of denial thereof.

(b) A copy of every final order or decision under the seal of the Commission shall be served in the manner prescribed by the Commission upon the person against whom it runs or his attorney and notice thereof shall be given to the other parties to the proceeding or their attorney. Such order shall take effect and become operative when issued unless otherwise designated therein and shall continue in force either for a period which may be designated therein or until changed or revoked by the Commission. If an order cannot, in the judgment of the Commission, be complied with within the time designated therein, the Commission may grant and prescribe such additional time as in its judgment is reasonably necessary to comply with the order, and may, on application and for good cause shown, extend the time for compliance fixed in its order. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1957, c. 1152, s. 4; 1959, c. 639, s. 4; 1961, c. 472, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1981, c. 193, s. 2; 2021-23, s. 9.)

§ 62-80. Powers of Commission to rescind, alter or amend prior order or decision.

The Commission may at any time upon notice to the public utility and to the other parties of record affected, and after opportunity to be heard as provided in the case of complaints, rescind, alter or amend any order or decision made by it. Any order rescinding, altering or amending a prior order or decision shall, when served upon the public utility affected, have the same effect as is herein provided for original orders or decisions. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-81. Special procedure in hearing and deciding rate cases.

(a) All cases or proceedings, declared to be or properly classified as general rate cases under G.S. 62-137, or any proceedings which will substantially affect any utility's overall level of earnings or rate of return, shall be set for trial or hearing by the Commission, which trial or hearing shall be set to commence within 180 days of the institution or filing thereof. All such cases or proceedings shall be subject to the time frame established under G.S. 62-134(b). All such cases or proceedings shall be tried or heard and decided in accordance with the ratemaking procedure set forth in G.S. 62-133 and such cases shall be given priority over all other cases or proceedings pending before the Commission. In all such cases the Commission shall make a transcript of the evidence and testimony presented and received by it and shall furnish a copy thereof to any party so requesting by the third business day after the taking of such evidence and testimony.

(b) Any public utility filing or applying for an increase in rates for electric, telephone, natural gas, water, or sewer service shall notify its customers proposed to be affected by such increase of such filing by regular mail, by newspaper publications, or by electronic means, as directed by the Commission, within 30 days of such filing, which notice shall state that the Commission shall set and shall conduct a trial or hearing with respect to such filing or application within 180 days of said filing date. All other public utilities shall give such notice in such manner as shall be prescribed by the Commission.

(c) In cases or proceedings filed with and pending before the Commission, where either (i) the total annual revenue requested, or (ii) where the total annual revenue increase requested, is less than two million dollars ($2,000,000), even though all or a substantial portion of the rate structure is being initially established or is under review, the chairman of the Commission may refer the proceeding to a panel of three commissioners or to a hearing commissioner or to a hearing examiner for hearing.

(d) In all proceedings for an increase in rates and all other proceedings declared to be general rate cases under G.S. 62-137, the Commission shall conduct the hearing or portions of the hearing within the area of the State served by the public utility whose rates are under consideration, provided this subsection shall not apply to proceedings held pursuant to G.S. 62-133.2 and G.S. 62-133.4.

(e) Repealed by Session Laws 2021-23, s. 10, effective May 17, 2021.

(f) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, or other provisions of this Chapter which would otherwise require a hearing, where there is no significant public protest received within 30 days of the publication of notice of a proposed rate change for a water or sewer utility, the Commission may decide the proceeding based on the record without a trial or hearing, provided said utility and all other parties of record have waived their right to any such hearing. Any decision made pursuant to this subsection shall be made in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 62-133 or 62-133.1. (1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1973, c. 1074; 1975, c. 45; c. 243, ss. 6, 9; c. 867, s. 6; 1977, c. 468, s. 15; 1981, c. 193, s. 3; c. 439; 2021-23, ss. 10, 25.)

§ 62-82. Special procedure on application for certificate for generating facility; appeal from award order.

(a) Notice of Application for Certificate for Generating Facility; Hearing; Briefs and Oral Arguments. – Whenever there is filed with the Commission an application for a certificate of public convenience and necessity for the construction of a facility for the generation of electricity under G.S. 62-110.1, the Commission shall require the applicant to publish a notice thereof once a week for four successive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the county where such facility is proposed to be constructed and thereafter the Commission upon complaint shall, or upon its own initiative may, upon reasonable notice, enter upon a hearing to determine whether such certificate shall be awarded. Any such hearing must be commenced by the Commission not later than three months after the filing of such application, and the procedure for rendering decisions therein shall be given priority over all other cases on the Commission's calendar of hearings and decisions, except rate proceedings referred to in G.S. 62-81. Such applications shall be heard as provided in G.S. 62-60.1, and the Commission shall, upon request of the applicant, furnish a transcript of evidence and testimony submitted by the end of the second business day after the taking of each day of testimony. The Commission or panel shall require that briefs and oral arguments in such cases be submitted within 30 days after the conclusion of the hearing, and the Commission or panel shall render its decision in such cases within 60 days after submission of such briefs and arguments. If the Commission or panel does not, upon its own initiative, order a hearing and does not receive a complaint within 10 days after the last day of publication of the notice, the Commission or panel shall enter an order awarding the certificate.

(b) Compensation for Damages Sustained by Appeal from Award of Certificate under G.S. 62-110.1; Bond Prerequisite to Appeal. – Any party or parties opposing, and appealing from, an order of the Commission which awards a certificate under G.S. 62-110.1 shall be obligated to recompense the party to whom the certificate is awarded, if such award is affirmed upon appeal, for the damages, if any, which such party sustains by reason of the delay in beginning the construction of the facility which is occasioned by the appeal, such damages to be measured by the increase in the cost of such generating facility (excluding legal fees, court costs, and other expenses incurred in connection with the appeal). No appeal from any order of the Commission which awards any such certificate may be taken by any party opposing such award unless, within the time limit for filing notice of appeal as provided for in G.S. 62-90, such party shall have filed with the

Commission a bond with sureties approved by the Commission, or an undertaking approved by the Commission, in such amount as the Commission determines will be reasonably sufficient to discharge the obligation hereinabove imposed upon such appealing party. The Commission may, when there are two or more such appealing parties, permit them to file a joint bond or undertaking. If the award order of the Commission is affirmed on appeal, the Commission shall determine the amount, if any, of damages sustained by the party to whom the certificate was awarded, and shall issue appropriate orders to assure that such damages be paid and, if necessary, that the bond or undertaking be enforced. (1965, c. 287, s. 3; 1975, c. 243, s. 7; 2004-199, s. 23; 2013-410, s. 29; 2021-23, s. 11.)

§§ 62-83 through 62-89. Reserved for future codification purposes.

Article 5.

Review and Enforcement of Orders.

§ 62-90. Right of appeal.

(a) Any party to a proceeding before the Commission may appeal from any final order or decision of the Commission within 30 days after the entry of the final order or decision, or within an additional time fixed by the Commission, not to exceed 30 additional days, and by order made within 30 days, if the party aggrieved by the decision or order files with the Commission a notice of appeal that sets forth specifically the ground or grounds on which the aggrieved party considers the decision or order to be unlawful, unjust, unreasonable, or unwarranted and that includes the errors alleged to have been committed by the Commission.

All other parties may give a notice of cross-appeal that sets forth specifically the grounds on which the party considers the decision or order to be unlawful, unjust, unreasonable, or unwarranted and that includes the errors alleged to have been committed by the Commission. The notice of cross-appeal shall be filed with the Commission within 20 days after the first notice of appeal has been filed, or within an additional time fixed by the Commission, not to exceed 20 additional days by order made within 20 days of the first filed notice of appeal.

(b) Any party may appeal from all or any portion of any final order or decision of the Commission in the manner provided in this section. Copy of the notice of appeal shall be mailed by the appealing party, at the time of filing with the Commission, to each party to the proceeding to the addresses as they appear in the files of the Commission in the proceeding. The failure of any party, other than the Commission, to be served with or to receive a copy of the notice of appeal does not affect the validity or regularity of the appeal.

(c) The Commission may on motion of any party to the proceeding or on its own motion set the objections to the final order upon which the appeal is based for further hearing before the Commission.

(d) The appeal lies to the appellate division of the General Court of Justice as provided in G.S. 7A-29. The procedure for the appeal is provided by the rules of appellate procedure.

(e), (f) Repealed by Session Laws 1975, c. 391, s. 12.

(g) Repealed by Session Laws 1983, c. 526, s. 5. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1955, c. 1207, s. 1; 1959, c. 639, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1967, c. 1190, s. 1; 1975, c. 391, s. 12; 1983, c. 526, ss. 4, 5; c. 572; 2023-54, s. 9.)

§ 62-91. Appeal docketed; title on appeal; priorities on appeal.

Unless otherwise provided by the rules of appellate procedure, the cause on appeal from the Utilities Commission shall be entitled "State of North Carolina ex rel. Utilities Commission (here add any additional parties in support of the Commission Order and their capacity before the Commission), Appellee(s) v. (here insert name of appellant and his capacity before the Commission), Appellant." Appeals from the Utilities Commission pending in the superior courts on September 30, 1967, shall remain on the civil issue docket of such superior court and shall have priority over other civil actions. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1967, c. 1190, s. 6; 1975, c. 391, s. 13; 1983, c. 526, s. 6.)

§ 62-92. Parties on appeal.

In any appeal to the appellate division of the General Court of Justice, the complainant in the original complaint before the Commission shall be a party to the record and each of the parties to the proceeding before the Commission shall have a right to appear and participate in said appeal. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1967, c. 1190, s. 2; 1983, c. 526, s. 7.)

§ 62-93. No evidence admitted on appeal; remission for further evidence.

No evidence shall be received at the hearing on appeal but if any party shall satisfy the court that evidence has been discovered since the hearing before the Commission that could not have been obtained for use at that hearing by the exercise of reasonable diligence, and will materially affect the merits of the case, the court may, in its discretion, remand the record and proceedings to the Commission with directions to take such subsequently discovered evidence, and after consideration thereof, to make such order as the Commission may deem proper, from which order an appeal shall lie as in the case of any other final order from which an appeal may be taken as provided in G.S. 62-90. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1955, c. 1207, s. 2; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-94. Record on appeal; extent of review.

(a) On appeal the court shall review the record and the issues raised in accordance with the rules of appellate procedure, and any alleged irregularities in procedures before the Commission, not shown in the record, shall be considered under the rules of appellate procedure.

(b) So far as necessary to the decision and where presented, the court shall decide all relevant questions of law, interpret constitutional and statutory provisions, and determine the meaning and applicability of the terms of any Commission action. The court may affirm or reverse the decision of the Commission, declare the decision null and void, or remand the case for further proceedings; or it may reverse or modify the decision if the substantial rights of the appellants have been prejudiced because the Commission's findings, inferences, conclusions, or decisions are any of the following:

(1) In violation of constitutional provisions.
(2) In excess of statutory authority or jurisdiction of the Commission.
(3) Made upon unlawful proceedings.
(4) Affected by other errors of law.
(5) Unsupported by competent, material, and substantial evidence in view of the entire record as submitted.
(6) Arbitrary or capricious.

(c) In making these determinations, the court shall review the whole record or the portions of it that are cited by any party, and due account shall be taken of the rule of prejudicial error. The

appellant shall not be permitted to rely upon any grounds for relief on appeal that were not set forth specifically in the appellant's notice of appeal filed with the Commission.

(d) The court shall also compel action of the Commission unlawfully withheld or unlawfully or unreasonably delayed.

(e) Upon any appeal, the rates fixed or any rule, finding, determination, or order made by the Commission under this Chapter is prima facie just and reasonable. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1955, c. 1207, s. 3; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1969, c. 614; 1975, c. 391, s. 14; 2023-54, s. 10.)

§ 62-95. Relief pending review on appeal.

Pending judicial review, the Commission is authorized, where it finds that justice so requires, to postpone the effective date of any action taken by it. Upon such conditions as may be required and to the extent necessary to prevent irreparable injury, a judge of the appellate court with jurisdiction over the case on appeal is authorized to issue all necessary and appropriate process to postpone the effective date of any action by the Commission or take such action as may be necessary to preserve status or rights of any of the parties pending conclusion of the proceedings on appeal. The court may require the applicant for such stay to post adequate bond as required by the court. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1967, c. 1190, s. 8; 1983, c. 526, s. 8.)

§ 62-96. Appeal to Supreme Court.

Appeals of final orders of the Utilities Commission to the Supreme Court are governed by Article 5 of General Statutes Chapter 7A. In all appeals filed in the Court of Appeals, any party may file a motion for discretionary review in the Supreme Court pursuant to G.S. 7A-31. If the Commission is the appealing party, it is not required to give any undertaking or make any deposit to assure payment of the cost of the appeal, and the court may advance the cause on its docket. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1967, c. 1190, s. 3; 1983, c. 526, s. 9.)

§ 62-97. Judgment on appeal enforced by mandamus.

In all cases in which, upon appeal, an order or decision of the Commission is affirmed, in whole or in part, the appellate court shall include in its decree a mandamus to the appropriate party to put said order in force, or so much thereof as shall be affirmed, or the appellate court may make such other order as it deems appropriate. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-98. Peremptory mandamus to enforce order, when no appeal.

(a) If no appeal is taken from an order or decision of the Commission within the time prescribed by law and the person to which the order or decision is directed fails to put the same in operation, as therein required, the Commission may apply to a superior court judge who has jurisdiction pursuant to G.S. 7A-47.1 or G.S. 7A-48 in Wake County or in the district or set of districts as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1 in which the business is conducted, upon 10 days' notice, for a peremptory mandamus upon said person for the putting in force of said order or decision; and if said judge shall find that the order of said Commission was valid and within the scope of its powers, he shall issue such peremptory mandamus.

(b) An appeal shall lie to the Court of Appeals in behalf of the Commission, or the defendant, from the refusal or the granting of such peremptory mandamus. The remedy prescribed in this section for enforcement of orders of the Commission is in addition to other remedies prescribed by law. (1949, c. 989, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1967, c. 1190, s. 4; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 92.)

§ 62-99. Repealed by Session Laws 1967, c. 1190, s. 5.

Article 5A.

Siting of Transmission Lines.

§ 62-100. Definitions.

As used in this Article:

(1) The term "begin to construct" includes any clearing of land, excavation, or other action that would adversely affect the natural environment of the route of a transmission line; but that term does not include land surveys, boring to ascertain geological conditions, or similar preliminary work undertaken to determine the suitability of proposed routes for a transmission line that results in temporary changes to the land.

(2) The word "county" means any one of the counties listed in G.S. 153A-10.

(3) The word "land" means any real estate or any estate or interest in real estate, including water and riparian rights, regardless of the use to which it is devoted.

(4) The word "lines" means distribution lines and transmission lines collectively.

(5) The word "municipality" means any incorporated community, whether designated as a city, town, or village and any area over which it exercises any of the powers granted by Chapter 160D of the General Statutes.

(6) The term "public utility" means any of the following:

a. A public utility, as defined in G.S. 62-3(23).

b. An electric membership corporation.

c. A joint municipal power agency.

d. A city or county that is engaged in producing, generating, transmitting, delivering, or furnishing electricity for private or public use.

(7) The term "transmission line" means an electric line designed with a capacity of at least 161 kilovolts. (1991, c. 189, s. 1; 2013-232, s. 1; 2022-62, s. 7.)

§ 62-101. Certificate to construct transmission line.

(a) No public utility or any other person may begin to construct a new transmission line without first obtaining from the Commission a certificate of environmental compatibility and public convenience and necessity. Only a public utility as defined in this Article may obtain a certificate to construct a new transmission line, except an entity may obtain a certificate to construct a new transmission line solely for the purpose of providing interconnection of an electric generation facility.

(b) A transmission line for which a certificate is required shall be constructed, operated, and maintained in conformity with the certificate. A certificate may be amended or transferred with the approval of the Commission.

(c) A certificate is not required for construction of the following lines:

(1) A line designed to carry less than 161 kilovolts;

(2) The replacement or expansion of an existing line with a similar line in substantially the same location, or the rebuilding, upgrading, modifying, modernizing, or reconstructing of an existing line for the purpose of increasing capacity or widening an existing right-of-way;

(3) A transmission line over which the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has licensing jurisdiction, if the Commission determines that agency has conducted a proceeding substantially equivalent to the proceeding required by this Article;
(4) Any transmission line for which, before March 6, 1989, a public utility or other person has surveyed a proposed route and, based on that route, has acquired rights-of-way for it by voluntary conveyances or has filed condemnation proceedings for acquiring those rights-of-way which, together, involve twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the total length of the proposed route;
(5) An electric membership corporation owned transmission line for which the construction or upgrading has had a proceeding conducted which the Commission determines is substantially equivalent to the proceeding required by this Article;
(6) Any line owned by a municipality to be constructed wholly within the corporate limits of that municipality.

(d) The Commission may waive the notice and hearing requirements of this Article and issue a certificate or amend an existing certificate under either of the following circumstances:
(1) When the Commission finds that the owners of land to be crossed by the proposed transmission line segment do not object to such a waiver and either:
a. The transmission line will be less than one mile long; or
b. The transmission line is for the purpose of relocating an existing transmission line segment to resolve a highway or other public project conflict; to accommodate a commercial, industrial, or other private development conflict; or to connect an existing transmission line to a substation, to another public utility, or to a public utility customer when any of these is in proximity to the existing transmission line.
(2) If the urgency of providing electric service requires the immediate construction of the transmission line, provided that the Commission shall give notice to those parties listed in G.S. 62-102(b) before issuing a certificate or approving an amendment.

(e) When justified by the public convenience and necessity and a showing that circumstances require immediate action, the Commission may permit an applicant for a certificate to proceed with initial clearing, excavation, and construction before receiving the certificate required by this section. In so proceeding, however, the applicant acts at its own risk, and by granting such permission, the Commission does not commit to ultimately grant a certificate for the transmission line.

(f) Nothing in this section restricts or impairs the Commission's jurisdiction pursuant to G.S. 62-73 to hear or make complaints. (1991, c. 189, s. 1; 2013-232, s. 2.)

§ 62-102. Application for certificate.

(a) An applicant for the certificate described in G.S. 62-101 shall file an application with the Commission containing the following information:
(1) The reasons the transmission line is needed;
(2) A description of the proposed location of the transmission line;
(3) A description of the proposed transmission line;
(4) An environmental report setting forth:
a. The environmental impact of the proposed action;

b. Any proposed mitigating measures that may minimize the environmental impact; and
c. Alternatives to the proposed action.

(5) A list of all necessary approvals that the applicant must obtain before it may begin to construct the transmission line; and

(6) Any other information the Commission requires.

(b) Within 10 days of filing the application, the applicant shall serve a copy of it on each of the following in the manner provided in G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4:

(1) The Public Staff;
(2) The Attorney General;
(3) The Department of Environmental Quality;
(4) The Department of Commerce;
(5) The Department of Transportation;
(6) The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services;
(7) The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources;
(8) Each county through which the applicant proposes to construct the transmission line;
(9) Each municipality through whose jurisdiction the applicant proposes to construct the transmission line; and
(10) Any other party that the Commission orders the applicant to serve.

The copy of the application served on each shall be accompanied by a notice specifying the date on which the application was filed.

(c) Within 10 days of the filing of the application, the applicant shall give public notice to persons residing in each county and municipality in which the transmission line is to be located by publishing a summary of the application in newspapers of general circulation so as to substantially inform those persons of the filing of the application. This notice shall thereafter be published in those newspapers a minimum of three additional times before the time for parties to intervene has expired. The summary shall also be sent to the North Carolina State Clearinghouse. The summary shall be subject to prior approval of the Commission and shall contain at a minimum the following:

(1) A summary of the proposed action;
(2) A description of the location of the proposed transmission line written in a readable style;
(3) The date on which the application was filed; and
(4) The date by which an interested person must intervene.

(d) Inadvertent failure of service on or notice to any municipality, county, governmental agency, or other person described in this section may be cured by an order of the Commission designed to give that person adequate notice to enable effective participation in the proceeding.

(e) An application for an amendment of a certificate shall be in a form approved by and shall contain any information required by the Commission. Notice of such an application shall be in the same manner as for a certificate. (1991, c. 189, s. 1; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 959, s. 18; 1997-261, s. 3; 1997-443, s. 11A.119(a); 2015-241, s. 14.30(s), (u).)

§ 62-103. Parties.

(a) The following persons shall be parties to a certification proceeding under this Article:

(1) The applicant;
(2) The Public Staff.

(b) The following persons may intervene in a certification proceeding under this Article if a petition to intervene is filed with the Commission within 100 days of the filing of the application and the petition is subsequently granted:

(1) Any State department, municipality, or county entitled to notice under G.S. 62-102(b);
(2) Any person whose land will be crossed by the proposed line;
(3) Any other person who can show a substantial interest in the certification proceeding. (1991, c. 189, s. 1.)

§ 62-104. Hearings.

(a) The Commission shall schedule a hearing upon each application filed under this Article not more than 120 days after the filing and shall conclude the proceeding as expeditiously as possible. The Commission may, however, extend this time period for substantial cause.

(b) If, after proper notice of the application has been given, no significant protests are filed with the Commission, the Commission may cancel the hearing and decide the case on the basis of the filed record.

(c) The Commission shall issue an order on each application filed under this Article within 60 days of the conclusion of the hearing. The Commission may extend this time period for substantial cause. (1991, c. 189, s. 1.)

§ 62-105. Burden of proof; decision.

(a) The burden of proof is on the applicant in all cases under this Article, except that any party proposing an alternative location for the proposed transmission line shall have the burden of proof in sustaining its position. The Commission may consider any factors that it finds are relevant and material to its decision. The Commission shall grant a certificate for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed transmission line if it finds:

(1) That the proposed transmission line is necessary to satisfy the reasonable needs of the public for an adequate and reliable supply of electric energy;
(2) That, when compared with reasonable alternative courses of action, construction of the transmission line in the proposed location is reasonable, preferred, and in the public interest;
(3) That the costs associated with the proposed transmission line are reasonable;
(4) That the impact the proposed transmission line will have on the environment is justified considering the state of available technology, the nature and economics of the various alternatives, and other material considerations; and
(5) That the environmental compatibility, public convenience, and necessity require the transmission line.

(b) If the Commission determines that the location of the proposed transmission line should be modified, it may condition its certificate upon modifications it finds necessary to make the findings and determinations set forth in subsection (a) of this section. (1991, c. 189, s. 1.)

§ 62-106. Effect of local ordinances.

Within 30 days after receipt of notice of an application as provided by G.S. 62-102, a municipality or county shall file with the Commission and serve on the applicant the provisions of an ordinance that may affect the construction, operation, or maintenance of the proposed transmission line in the manner provided by the rules of the Commission. If the municipality or

county does not serve notice as provided above of any such ordinance provisions, the provisions of such ordinance may not be enforced by the municipality or county. If the applicant proposes not to comply with any part of the ordinance, the applicant may move the Commission for an order preempting that part of the ordinance. Service of the motion on the municipality or county by the applicant shall make the municipality or county a party to the proceeding. If the Commission finds that the greater public interest requires it, the Commission may include in a certificate issued under this Article an order preempting any part of such county or municipal ordinance with respect to the construction, operation or maintenance of the proposed transmission line. (1991, c. 189, s. 1.)

§ 62-107. Rules.

Pursuant to G.S. 62-31, the Commission may adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this Article. In addition, the Commission shall adopt rules requiring public utilities to file periodic reports stating their short-term and long-term plans for construction of transmission lines in this State. (1991, c. 189, s. 1.)

§ 62-108. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-109. Reserved for future codification purposes.

Article 6.

The Utility Franchise.

§ 62-110. Certificate of convenience and necessity.

(a) Except as provided for bus companies in Article 12 of this Chapter, no public utility shall hereafter begin the construction or operation of any public utility plant or system or acquire ownership or control thereof, either directly or indirectly, without first obtaining from the Commission a certificate that public convenience and necessity requires, or will require, such construction, acquisition, or operation: Provided, that this section shall not apply to construction into territory contiguous to that already occupied and not receiving similar service from another public utility, nor to construction in the ordinary conduct of business.

(b) The Commission shall be authorized to issue a certificate to any person applying to the Commission to offer long distance services as a public utility as defined in G.S. 62-3(23)a.6., provided that such person is found to be fit, capable, and financially able to render such service, and that such additional service is required to serve the public interest effectively and adequately; provided further, that in such cases the Commission shall consider the impact on the local exchange customers and only permit such additional service if the Commission finds that it will not jeopardize reasonably affordable local exchange service.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the terms, conditions, rates, and interconnections for long distance services offered on a competitive basis shall be regulated by the Commission in accordance with the public interest. In promulgating rules necessary to implement this provision, the Commission shall consider whether uniform or nonuniform application of such rules is consistent with the public interest. Provided further that the Commission shall consider whether the charges for the provision of interconnections should be uniform.

For purposes of this section, long distance services shall include the transmission of messages or other communications between two or more central offices wherein such central offices are not connected on July 1, 1983, by any extended area service, local measured service, or other local calling arrangement.

(c) The Commission shall be authorized, consistent with the public interest, to adopt procedures for the issuance of a special certificate to any person for the limited purpose of offering telephone service to the public by means of coin, coinless, or key-operated pay telephone instruments. This service may be in addition to or in competition with public telephone services offered by the certificated telephone company in the service area. The access line from the pay instrument to the network may be obtained from the local exchange telephone company in the service area where the pay instrument is located, from any certificated competitive local provider, or any other provider authorized by the Commission. The Commission shall promulgate rules to implement the service authorized by this section, recognizing the competitive nature of the offerings and, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Commission shall determine the extent to which such services shall be regulated and to the extent necessary to protect the public interest regulate the terms, conditions, and rates for such service and the terms and conditions for interconnection to the local exchange network.

(d) The Commission shall be authorized, consistent with the public interest and notwithstanding any other provision of law, to adopt procedures for the purpose of allowing shared use and/or resale of any telephone service provided to persons who occupy the same contiguous premises (as such term shall be defined by the Commission); provided, however, that there shall be no "networking" of any services authorized under this subsection whereby two or more premises where such services are provided are connected, and provided further that any certificated local provider or any other provider authorized by the Commission may provide access lines or trunks connecting such authorized service to the telephone network, and that the local service rates permitted or approved by the Commission for local exchange lines or trunks being shared or resold shall be on a measured usage basis where facilities are available or on a message rate basis otherwise. Provided however, the Commission may permit or approve flat rates, measured rates, message rates, or some combination of those rates for shared or resold services whenever the service is offered to patrons of hotels or motels, occupants of timeshare or condominium complexes serving primarily transient occupants, to patrons of hospitals, nursing homes, rest homes, or licensed retirement centers, or to members of clubs or students living in quarters furnished by educational institutions, or to persons temporarily subleasing residential premises. The Commission shall issue rules to implement the service authorized by this subsection, considering the competitive nature of the offerings and, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Commission shall determine the extent to which such services shall be regulated and, to the extent necessary to protect the public interest, regulate the terms, conditions, and rates charged for such services and the terms and conditions for interconnection to the local exchange network. The Commission shall require any person offering telephone service under this subsection by means of a Private Branch Exchange ("PBX") or key system to secure adequate local exchange trunks from any certificated local provider or any other provider authorized by the Commission so as to assure a quality of service equal to the quality of service generally found acceptable by the Commission. Unless otherwise ordered by the Commission for good cause shown by the company, the right and obligation of the certificated local provider or any other provider authorized by the Commission to provide local service directly to any person located within its certificated service area shall continue to apply to premises where shared or resold telephone service is available, provided however, the Commission shall be authorized to establish the terms and conditions under which such services should be provided.

(e) Notwithstanding subsection (d) of this section, the Commission may authorize any telephone services provided to a nonprofit college or university, and its affiliated medical centers,

which is qualified under Sections 501 and 170 of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or which is a State-owned institution, to be shared or resold by that institution on both contiguous campus premises owned or leased by the institution and noncontiguous premises owned or leased exclusively by the institution, provided these services are offered to students or guests housed in quarters furnished by the institution, patrons of hospitals or medical centers of the institution, or persons or businesses providing educational, research, professional, consulting, food, or other support services directly to or for the institution, its students, or guests. The services of a certificated local provider or any other provider authorized by the Commission, when provided to said colleges, universities, and affiliated medical centers shall be rated in the same way as those provided for shared service offered to patrons of hospitals, nursing homes, rest homes, licensed retirement centers, members of clubs or students living in quarters furnished by educational institutions as provided for in subsection (d) of this section. The institutions regulated pursuant to this subsection shall not be prohibited from electing optional services from the certificated local provider or any other provider authorized by the Commission which include measured or message rate services. There shall be no "networking" of any services authorized under this subsection whereby two or more different institutions where such services are provided are interconnected. Any certificated local provider or any other provider authorized by the Commission may provide access lines or trunks connecting such authorized services to the telephone network. The Commission shall require such institutions to secure adequate local exchange trunks from the certificated local provider or any other provider authorized by the Commission to assure a quality of service equal to the quality of service generally found acceptable by the Commission. Unless otherwise ordered by the Commission for good cause shown by the certificated local provider or any other provider authorized by the Commission, the right and obligation of that provider to provide local service directly to any person located within its certificated service area shall continue to apply to premises where shared or resold telephone service is available under this subsection, provided however, the Commission shall be authorized to establish the terms and conditions under which such service should be provided. The Commission shall issue rules to implement the services authorized by this subsection.

(f) Reserved.

(f1) Except as provided in subsection (f2) of this section, the Commission is authorized, following notice and an opportunity for interested parties to be heard, to issue a certificate to any person applying to provide local exchange or exchange access services as a public utility as defined in G.S. 62-3(23)a.6., without regard to whether local telephone service is already being provided in the territory for which the certificate is sought, provided that the person seeking to provide the service makes a satisfactory showing to the Commission that (i) the person is fit, capable, and financially able to render such service; (ii) the service to be provided will reasonably meet the service standards that the Commission may adopt; (iii) the provision of the service will not adversely impact the availability of reasonably affordable local exchange service; (iv) the person, to the extent it may be required to do so by the Commission, will participate in the support of universally available telephone service at affordable rates; and (v) the provision of the service does not otherwise adversely impact the public interest. In its application for certification, the person seeking to provide the service shall set forth with particularity the proposed geographic territory to be served and the types of local exchange and exchange access services to be provided. Except as provided in G.S. 62-133.5(f), any person receiving a certificate under this section shall, until otherwise determined by the Commission, file and maintain with the Commission a complete list

of the local exchange and exchange access services to be provided and the prices charged for those services, and shall be subject to such reporting requirements as the Commission may require.

Any certificate issued by the Commission pursuant to this subsection shall not permit the provision of local exchange or exchange access service until July 1, 1996, unless the Commission shall have approved a price regulation plan pursuant to G.S. 62-133.5(a) for a local exchange company with an effective date prior to July 1, 1996. In the event a price regulation plan becomes effective prior to July 1, 1996, the Commission is authorized to permit the provision of local exchange or exchange access service by a competing local provider in the franchised area of such local exchange company.

The Commission is authorized to adopt rules it finds necessary (i) to provide for the reasonable interconnection of facilities between all providers of telecommunications services; (ii) to determine when necessary the rates for such interconnection; (iii) to provide for the reasonable unbundling of essential facilities where technically and economically feasible; (iv) to provide for the transfer of telephone numbers between providers in a manner that is technically and economically reasonable; (v) to provide for the continued development and encouragement of universally available telephone service at reasonably affordable rates; and (vi) to carry out the provisions of this subsection in a manner consistent with the public interest, which will include a consideration of whether and to what extent resale should be permitted. In adopting rules to establish an appropriate definition of universal service, the Commission shall consider evolving trends in telecommunications services and the need for consumers to have access to high-speed communications networks, the internet, and other services to the extent that those services provide social benefits to the public at a reasonable cost.

Local exchange companies and competing local providers shall negotiate the rates for local interconnection. In the event that the parties are unable to agree within 90 days of a bona fide request for interconnection on appropriate rates for interconnection, either party may petition the Commission for determination of the appropriate rates for interconnection. The Commission shall determine the appropriate rates for interconnection within 180 days from the filing of the petition.

Except as provided in subsections (f4) and (f5) of this section, each local exchange company shall be the universal service provider (carrier of last resort) in the area in which it is certificated to operate on July 1, 1995. Each local exchange company or telecommunications service provider with carrier of last resort responsibility may satisfy its carrier of last resort obligation by using any available technology. In continuing this State's commitment to universal service, the Commission shall, by December 31, 1996, adopt interim rules that designate the person that should be the universal service provider and to determine whether universal service should be funded through interconnection rates or through some other funding mechanism. At a time determined by the Commission to be in the public interest, the Commission shall conduct an investigation for the purpose of adopting final rules concerning the provision of universal services, and whether universal service should be funded through interconnection rates or through some other funding mechanism, and, consistent with the provisions of subsections (f4) and (f5) of this section, the person that should be the universal service provider. A local exchange company that has elected to be subject to alternative regulation under G.S. 62-133.5(m) does not have any carrier of last resort obligations.

The Commission shall make the determination required pursuant to this subsection in a manner that furthers this State's policy favoring universally available telephone service at reasonable rates.

(f2) The provisions of subsection (f1) of this section shall not be applicable to franchised areas within the State that are being served by local exchange companies with 200,000 access lines

or less located within the State, and it is further provided that such local exchange company providing service to 200,000 access lines or less shall not be subject to the regulatory reform procedures outlined under the terms of G.S. 62-133.5(a) or permitted to compete in territory outside of its franchised area for local exchange and exchange access services until such time as the franchised area is opened to competing local providers as provided for in this subsection. Upon the filing of an application by a local exchange company with 200,000 access lines or less for regulation under the provisions of G.S. 62-133.5(a), the Commission shall apply the provisions of that section to such local exchange company, but only upon the condition that the provisions of subsection (f1) of this section are to be applicable to the franchised area and local exchange and exchange access services offered by such a local exchange company.

(f3) The provisions of subsection (f1) of this section shall not be applicable to areas served by telephone membership corporations formed and existing under Article 4 of Chapter 117 of the General Statutes and exempt from regulation as public utilities, pursuant to G.S. 62-3(23)d. and G.S. 117-35. To the extent a telephone membership corporation has carrier of last resort obligations, it may fulfill those obligations using any available technology.

(f4) When any telecommunications service provider: (i) enters into an agreement to provide local exchange service for a subdivision or other area where access to right-of-way for the provision of local exchange service by other telecommunications service providers has not been granted coincident with any other grant of access by the property owner; or (ii) enters into an agreement after July 1, 2008, to provide communications service that otherwise precludes the local exchange company from providing communications service for the subdivision or other area, the local exchange company is not obligated to provide basic local exchange telephone service or any other communications service to customers in the subdivision or other area. In each of the foregoing instances, the telecommunications service provider shall be the provider in the subdivision or other area under the terms of the agreement and applicable law. The local exchange company for the franchise area or territory in which the subdivision or other area is located shall be relieved of any universal service provider obligation for that subdivision or other area. In that case, the local exchange company and all other telecommunications service providers shall retain the option, but not the obligation, to serve customers in the subdivision or other area. The local exchange company shall provide written notification to the appropriate State agency that the local exchange company is no longer the universal service provider for the subdivision or other area. The appropriate State agency shall retain the right to redesignate a local exchange company or telecommunications service provider as the universal service provider in accordance with the provisions of subsection (f5) of this section. Any person that enters into an agreement with a telecommunications service provider to provide local exchange service for a subdivision or other area as described in this subsection shall notify a purchaser of real property within the subdivision or other area of the agreement.

For any circumstance not described in this subsection, a local exchange company may be granted a waiver of its carrier of last resort obligation in a subdivision or other area by the appropriate State agency based upon a showing by the local exchange company of all of the following:

(1) Providing service in the subdivision or area would be inequitable or unduly burdensome.
(2) One or more alternative providers of local exchange service exist.
(3) Granting the waiver is in the public interest.

(f5) If the appropriate State agency finds, upon hearing, that the telecommunications service provider serving the subdivision or other area pursuant to subsection (f4) of this section, or its successor in interest, is no longer willing or no longer able to provide adequate services to the subdivision or other area, the appropriate State agency may redesignate the local exchange company for the franchise area or territory in which the subdivision or other area is located, or another telecommunications service provider, to be the universal service provider for the subdivision or other area. If the redesignated local exchange company is subject to price regulation or other alternative regulation under G.S. 62-133.5, it may treat the costs incurred in extending its facilities into the subdivision or other area as exogenous to that form of regulation and may, subject to providing written notice to the Commission, adjust its rates to recover these costs on an equitable basis from its customers whose rates are subject to regulation under G.S. 62-133.5. Any such action shall be subject to review by the Commission in a complaint proceeding initiated by any interested party pursuant to G.S. 62-73. If the redesignated local exchange company is not subject to price regulation or other alternative regulation under G.S. 62-133.5, it may recover the costs incurred in extending its facilities into the subdivision or other area in the form of a surcharge, subject to Commission approval, spread equitably among all of its customers in a proceeding under G.S. 62-136(a), without having to file a general rate case proceeding. During the period that a telecommunications service provider is serving as a universal service provider and prior to the redesignation of a local exchange company as the universal service provider as provided for herein, for the purposes of the appropriate State agency's periodic certification to the Federal Communications Commission in matters regarding eligible telecommunications carrier status, a local company's status shall not be deemed to affect its eligibility to be an eligible telecommunications carrier, and the appropriate State agency shall so certify.

(f6) For purposes of subsections (f4) and (f5) of this section, the following definitions are applicable:

(1) "Appropriate State agency" means the Commission for purposes of any subdivision or other area within the franchise area of a local exchange company, and the Rural Electrification Authority for the purposes of any subdivision or other area within the franchise area or territory of a telephone membership corporation.

(1a) "Communications service" means either voice, video, or data service through any technology.

(2) "Local exchange company" means a local exchange company subject to price regulation, or other alternative regulation or rate base regulation by the Commission or a telephone membership corporation organized under G.S. 117-30.

(3) "Telecommunications service provider" means a competing local provider, or any other person providing local exchange service by means of voice-over-internet protocol, wireless, power line, satellite, or other nontraditional means, whether or not regulated by the Commission, but the term shall not include local exchange companies or telephone membership corporations.

(g) In addition to the authority to issue a certificate of public convenience and necessity and establish rates otherwise granted in this Chapter, for the purpose of encouraging water conservation, the Commission may, consistent with the public interest, adopt procedures that allow (i) a lessor of any leased residential premises, as that term is defined under G.S. 42-59(3), to charge

for the costs of providing water or sewer service to persons who occupy the leased premises, (ii) an owners' association, as that term is defined under G.S. 47F-1-103(3), to charge for the costs of providing water or sewer service to persons who occupy townhomes within a planned community, as that term is defined under G.S. 47F-1-103(23), and (iii) a unit owners' association, as that term is defined under G.S. 47C-1-103(3), to charge for the costs of providing water or sewer service to persons who occupy a condominium, as that term is defined under G.S. 47C-1-103(7). For purposes of this subsection, the term "townhome" means a single-family dwelling unit constructed in a group of three or more attached units. The following provisions shall apply:

(1) Except as provided in subdivisions (1a), (1b), and (1c) of this subsection, all charges for water or sewer service shall be based on the user's metered consumption of water, which shall be determined by metered measurement of all water consumed. The rate charged by the lessor, owners' association, or unit owners' association, as applicable, shall not exceed the unit consumption rate charged by the supplier of the service.

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

a. A lessor shall not utilize a ratio utility billing system or other allocation billing system that does not rely on individually submetered hot water usage to determine the allocation of water and sewer costs.

b. The lessor shall not include in a lessee's bill the cost of water and sewer service used in common areas or water loss due to leaks in the lessor's water mains. A lessor shall not bill or attempt to collect for excess water usage resulting from a plumbing malfunction or other condition that is not known to the lessee or that has been reported to the lessor.

c. All equipment used to measure water usage shall comply with guidelines promulgated by the American Water Works Association.

d. The lessor shall maintain records for a minimum of 12 months that demonstrate how each lessee's allocated costs were calculated for water and sewer service. Upon advanced written notice to the lessor, a lessee may inspect the records during reasonable business hours.

e. Bills for water and sewer service sent by the lessor to the lessee shall contain all the following information:

1. The amount of water and sewer services allocated to the lessee during the billing period.
2. The method used to determine the amount of water and sewer services allocated to the lessee.
3. Beginning and ending dates for the billing period.

4. The past-due date, which shall not be less than 25 days after the bill is mailed.
5. A local or toll-free telephone number and address that the lessee can use to obtain more information about the bill.

(1b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivisions (1), (1a), and (1c) of this subsection, if the Commission approves a flat rate to be charged by a water or sewer utility for the provision of water or sewer services to contiguous dwelling units, the lessor, owners' association, or unit owners' association, as applicable, may pass through and charge the tenants or occupants of the contiguous dwelling units the same flat rate for water or sewer services, rather than a rate based on metered consumption, and an administrative fee as authorized in subdivision (2) of this subsection. Bills for water and sewer service sent by the lessor, owners' association, or unit owners' association, as applicable, to the lessee or occupant shall contain all the information required by sub-sub-subdivisions e.2. through e.5. of subdivision (1a) of this subsection.

(1c) The lessor may equally divide the amount of the water and sewer bill for a unit among all the lessees in the unit and may send one bill to each lessee. The amount charged shall be prorated when a lessee has not leased the unit for the same number of days as the other lessees in the unit during the billing period. Each bill may include an administrative fee up to the amount of the then-current administrative fee authorized by the Commission in Rule 18-6 for water service and, when applicable, a late fee in an amount determined by the Commission. The lessor shall not charge the cost of water and sewer from any other unit or common area in a lessee's bill sent pursuant to this subdivision.

(2) The lessor, owners' association, or unit owners' association, as applicable, may charge a reasonable administrative fee for providing water or sewer service not to exceed the maximum administrative fee authorized by the Commission.

(3) The Commission shall adopt rules to implement this subsection.

(4) The Commission shall develop an application that lessors, owners' associations, or unit owners' associations, as applicable, must submit for authority to charge for water or sewer service. The form shall include all of the following:
a. A description of the applicant and the property to be served.
b. A description of the proposed billing method and billing statements.
c. The schedule of rates charged to the applicant by the supplier.
d. The schedule of rates the applicant proposes to charge the applicant's customers.
e. The administrative fee proposed to be charged by the applicant.
f. The name of and contact information for the applicant and its agents.
g. The name of and contact information for the supplying water or sewer system.
h. Any additional information that the Commission may require.

(4a) The Commission shall develop an application that lessors, owners' associations, or unit owners' associations, as applicable, must submit for authority to charge for water or sewer service at single-family dwellings that allows the applicant to serve multiple dwellings in the State, subject to an approval by the Commission. The form shall include all of the following:

a. A description of the applicant and a listing of the address of all the properties to be served. An updated listing of addresses served by the applicant shall be provided to the Commission annually.
b. A description of the proposed billing method and billing statements.
c. The administrative fee proposed to be charged by the applicant.
d. The name and contact information for the applicant and its agents.
e. Any additional information the Commission may require.

(5) The Commission shall approve or disapprove an application within 30 days of the filing of a completed application with the Commission. If the Commission has not issued an order disapproving a completed application within 30 days, the application shall be deemed approved.

(6) A provider of water or sewer service under this subsection may increase the rate for service so long as the rate does not exceed the unit consumption rate charged by the supplier of the service. A provider of water or sewer service under this subsection may change the administrative fee so long as the administrative fee does not exceed the maximum administrative fee authorized by the Commission. In order to change the rate or administrative fee, the provider shall file a notice of revised schedule of rates and fees with the Commission. The Commission may prescribe the form by which the provider files a notice of a revised schedule of rates and fees under this subsection. The form shall include all of the following:
a. The current schedule of the unit consumption rates charged by the provider.
b. The schedule of rates charged by the supplier to the provider that the provider proposes to pass through to the provider's customers.
c. The schedule of the unit consumption rates proposed to be charged by the provider.
d. The current administrative fee charged by the provider, if applicable.
e. The administrative fee proposed to be charged by the provider.

(7) A notification of revised schedule of rates and fees shall be presumed valid and shall be allowed to become effective upon 14 days notice to the Commission, unless otherwise suspended or disapproved by order issued within 14 days after filing.

(8) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, the Commission shall determine the extent to which the services shall be regulated and, to the extent necessary to protect the public interest, regulate the terms, conditions, and rates that may be charged for the services. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to alter the rights, obligations, or remedies of persons providing water or sewer services and their customers under any other provision of law.

(9) A provider of water or sewer service under this subsection shall not be required to file annual reports pursuant to G.S. 62-36 or to furnish a bond pursuant to G.S. 62-110.3.

(h) In addition to the authority to issue a certificate of public convenience and necessity and establish rates otherwise granted in this Chapter, the Commission may, consistent with the public interest, adopt procedures that allow a lessor of any leased residential premises, as that term is defined under G.S. 42-59(3), that has individually metered units for electric service in the

lessor's name to charge for the actual costs of providing electric service to each lessee. The following provisions shall apply to the charges authorized under this subsection:

(1) The lessor shall equally divide the actual amount of the individual electric service bill for a unit among all the lessees in the unit and shall send one bill to each lessee. The amount charged shall be prorated when a lessee has not leased the unit for the same number of days as the other lessees in the unit during the billing period. Each bill may include an administrative fee up to the amount of the then-current administrative fee authorized by the Commission in Rule 18-6 for water service and, when applicable, a late fee in an amount determined by the Commission. The lessor shall not charge the cost of electricity from any other unit or common area in a lessee's bill. The lessor may, at the lessor's option, pay any portion of any bill sent to a lessee.

(2) A lessor who charges for electric service under this subsection is solely responsible for the prompt payment of all bills rendered by the electric utility providing service to the leased premises and is the customer of the electric utility subject to all rules, regulations, tariffs, riders, and service regulations associated with the provision of electric service to retail customers of the utility.

(3) The lessor shall maintain records for a minimum of 36 months that demonstrate how each lessee's allocated costs were calculated for electric service. A lessee may inspect these records, including the actual per unit public utility billings, during reasonable business hours and may obtain copies of the records for a reasonable copying fee.

(4) Bills for electric service sent by the lessor to the lessee shall contain all of the following information:

a. When the lessor of a residential building or multiunit apartment complex has a separate lease for each bedroom in the unit, the bill charged by the electric supplier for the unit as a whole and the amount of charges allocated to the lessee during the billing period.

b. The name of the electric power supplier providing electric service to the leased premises.

c. Beginning and ending dates for the usage period and, if provided by the electric supplier, the date the meter was read for that usage period.

d. The past-due date, which shall not be less than 25 days after the bill is mailed to the lessee.

e. A local or toll-free telephone number and address of the lessor that the lessee can use to obtain more information about the bill.

f. The amount of any administrative fee and late fee approved by the Commission and included in the bill.

g. A statement of the lessee's right to address questions about the bill to the lessor and the lessee's right to file a complaint with, or otherwise seek recourse from, the Commission if the lessee cannot resolve an electric service billing dispute with the lessor.

(5) The Commission shall develop an application that lessors must submit for Commission approval to charge for electric service as provided in this section. The form shall include all of the following:

a. A description of the lessor and the property to be served.

b. A description of the proposed billing method and billing statements.
c. The administrative fee and late payment fee, if any, proposed to be charged by the lessor.
d. The name of and contact information for the lessor and the lessor's agents.
e. The name of and contact information for the supplier of electric service to the lessor's rental property.
f. A copy of the lease forms used by the lessor for lessees who are billed for electric service pursuant to this subsection.
g. Any additional information that the Commission may require.

(6) The Commission shall approve or disapprove an application within 60 days of the filing of a completed application with the Commission. If the Commission has not issued an order disapproving a completed application within 60 days, the application shall be deemed approved.

(7) A lessor who charges for electric service under this subsection shall not be required to file annual reports pursuant to G.S. 62-36.

(7a) An applicant may submit for authority to charge for electric service for more than one property in a single application. Information relating to all properties covered by the application need only be provided once in the application.

(8) The Commission shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this subsection.

(i) In addition to the authority to issue a certificate of public convenience and necessity and establish rates otherwise granted in this Chapter, the Commission may, consistent with the public interest, adopt procedures that allow a lessor of any leased residential premises, as that term is defined under G.S. 42-59(3), that has individually metered units for natural gas service in the lessor's name to charge for the actual costs of providing natural gas service to each lessee. The following provisions shall apply to the charges authorized under this subsection:

(1) The lessor shall equally divide the actual amount of the individual natural gas service bill for a unit among all the lessees in the unit and shall send one bill to each lessee. The amount charged shall be prorated when a lessee has not leased the unit for the same number of days as the other lessees in the unit during the billing period. Each bill may include an administrative fee up to the amount of the then-current administrative fee authorized by the Commission in Rule 18-6 for water service and, when applicable, a late fee in an amount determined by the Commission. The lessor shall not charge the cost of natural gas service from any other unit or common area in a lessee's bill. The lessor may, at the lessor's option, pay any portion of any bill sent to a lessee.

(2) A lessor who charges for natural gas service under this subsection is solely responsible for the prompt payment of all bills rendered by the natural gas utility providing service to the leased premises and is the customer of the natural gas utility subject to all rules, regulations, tariffs, riders, and service regulations associated with the provision of natural gas service to retail customers of the utility.

(3) The lessor shall maintain records for a minimum of 36 months that demonstrate how each lessee's allocated costs were calculated for natural gas service. A lessee may inspect these records, including the actual per unit public utility

billings, during reasonable business hours and may obtain copies of the records for a reasonable copying fee.

(4) Bills for natural gas service sent by the lessor to the lessee shall contain all of the following information:

a. When the lessor of a residential building or multiunit apartment complex has a separate lease for each bedroom in the unit, the bill charged by the natural gas supplier for the unit as a whole and the amount of charges allocated to the lessee during the billing period.

b. The name of the natural gas supplier providing natural gas service to the leased premises.

c. Beginning and ending dates for the usage period and, if provided by the natural gas supplier, the date the meter was read for that usage period.

d. The past-due date, which shall not be less than 25 days after the bill is mailed to the lessee.

e. A local or toll-free telephone number and address that the lessee can use to obtain more information about the bill.

f. The amount of any administrative fee and late fee approved by the Commission and included in the bill.

g. A statement of the lessee's right to address questions about the bill to the lessor and the lessee's right to file a complaint with, or otherwise seek recourse from, the Commission if the lessee cannot resolve a natural gas service billing dispute with the lessor.

(5) The Commission shall develop an application that lessors must submit for Commission approval to charge for natural gas service as provided in this section. The form shall include all of the following:

a. A description of the lessor and the property to be served.

b. A description of the proposed billing method and billing statements.

c. The administrative fee and late payment fee, if any, proposed to be charged by the lessor.

d. The name of and contact information for the lessor and the lessor's agents.

e. The name of and contact information for the supplier of natural gas service to the lessor's rental property.

f. A copy of the lease forms used by the lessor for lessees who are billed for natural gas service pursuant to this subsection.

g. Any additional information that the Commission may require.

(6) The Commission shall approve or disapprove an application within 60 days of the filing of a completed application with the Commission. If the Commission has not issued an order disapproving a completed application within 60 days, the application shall be deemed approved.

(7) A lessor who charges for natural gas service under this subsection shall not be required to file annual reports pursuant to G.S. 62-36.

(7a) An applicant may submit for authority to charge for natural gas service for more than one property in a single application. Information relating to all properties covered by the application need only be provided once in the application.

(8) The Commission shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this subsection.

(j) In addition to the authority to issue a certificate of public convenience and necessity and establish rates otherwise granted in this Chapter, the Commission may, consistent with the public interest, allow a lessor of a multiunit apartment building who has obtained the approval of the Commission for the use of a master meter pursuant to G.S. 143-151.42 to charge each tenant for the electricity or natural gas used by a central system based on each tenant's metered or measured share of the electricity or natural gas used by the central system. In the case of electricity used by a central system, the provisions of subdivisions (2) through (8) of subsection (h) of this section shall apply. In the case of natural gas used by a central system, the provisions of subdivisions (2) through (8) of subsection (i) of this section shall apply. (1931, c. 455; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1043, s. 2; 1985, c. 676, s. 9; c. 680; 1987, c. 445, s. 1; 1989, c. 451, ss. 1, 2; 1995, c. 27, s. 4; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 753, s. 1; 1997-207, s. 1; 1998-180, ss. 1, 2; 1998-212, s. 15.8B; 1999-112, s. 1; 2001-252, s. 1; 2001-502, s. 1; 2002-14, s. 1; 2003-99, s. 1; 2003-173, s. 1; 2004-143, s. 7; 2005-385, ss. 1, 2; 2009-202, s. 1; 2009-279, s. 1; 2011-52, s. 1; 2011-252, s. 4; 2017-10, s. 2.2(b); 2017-172, s. 2; 2019-56, s. 1; 2021-23, s. 27(b); 2022-6, s. 20.13(a); 2023-137, s. 23; 2025-25, s. 29(3).)

§ 62-110.1. Certificate for construction of generating facility; analysis of long-range needs for expansion of facilities; ongoing review of construction costs; inclusion of approved construction costs in rates.

(a) Notwithstanding the proviso in G.S. 62-110, no public utility or other person shall begin the construction of any steam, water, or other facility for the generation of electricity to be directly or indirectly used for the furnishing of public utility service, even though the facility be for furnishing the service already being rendered, without first obtaining from the Commission a certificate that public convenience and necessity requires, or will require, such construction.

(b) For the purpose of subsections (a) and (d) of this section, "public utility" shall include any electric membership corporation operating within this State, and the term "public utility service" shall include the service rendered by any such electric membership corporation.

(c) The Commission shall develop, publicize, and keep current an analysis of the long-range needs for expansion of facilities for the generation of electricity in North Carolina, including its estimate of the probable future growth of the use of electricity, the probable needed generating reserves, the extent, size, mix and general location of generating plants and arrangements for pooling power to the extent not regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and other arrangements with other utilities and energy suppliers to achieve maximum efficiencies for the benefit of the people of North Carolina, and shall consider such analysis in acting upon any petition by any utility for construction. In developing such analysis, the Commission shall, as it deems necessary, confer and consult with the public utilities in North Carolina, the utilities commissions or comparable agencies of neighboring states, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and other agencies having relevant information and may participate as it deems useful in any joint boards investigating generating plant sites or the probable need for future generating facilities. In addition to such reports as public utilities may be required by statute or rule of the Commission to file with the Commission, any such utility in North Carolina may submit to the Commission its proposals as to the future needs for electricity to serve the people of the State or the area served by such utility, and insofar as practicable, each such utility, the Public Staff, and intervenors may attend or be represented at any formal conference conducted by the

Commission in developing a plan for the future requirements of electricity for North Carolina or this region. In the course of making the analysis and developing the plan, the Commission shall conduct a public hearing on such plan in the year a biennial integrated resource plan is filed and may hold a public hearing on such plan in a year that an annual update of an integrated resource plan is filed. Each year, the Commission shall submit to the Governor and to the appropriate committees of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources, the chairs of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Natural, and Economic Resources, and the chairs of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources a report of its analysis and plan, the progress to date in carrying out such plan, and the program of the Commission for the ensuing year in connection with such plan.

(d) In acting upon any petition for the construction of any facility for the generation of electricity, the Commission shall take into account the applicant's arrangements with other electric utilities for interchange of power, pooling of plant, purchase of power and other methods for providing reliable, efficient, and economical electric service.

(e) As a condition for receiving a certificate, the applicant shall file an estimate of construction costs in such detail as the Commission may require. The Commission shall hold a public hearing on each application and no certificate shall be granted unless the Commission has approved the estimated construction costs and made a finding that construction will be consistent with the Commission's plan for expansion of electric generating capacity. A certificate for the construction of generating facility by an electric public utility, as that term is defined by G.S. 62-110.9, shall be granted only if the applicant demonstrates and the Commission finds that the facility is part of the least cost path to achieve compliance with the authorized carbon reduction goal in G.S. 62-110.9, will maintain or improve upon the adequacy and reliability of the existing grid, and that the construction and operation of the facility is in the public interest, and that the other resources listed in G.S. 62-110.9(1) would not establish or maintain a more cost-effective and reliable generation system consistent with G.S. 62-110.9. In making its determination, the Commission shall consider resource and fuel diversity and reasonably anticipated future operating costs. Once the Commission grants a certificate, no public utility shall cancel construction of a generating unit or facility without approval from the Commission based upon a finding that the construction is no longer in the public interest.

(e1) Upon the request of the public utility or upon its own motion, the Commission may review the certificate to determine whether changes in the probable future growth of the use of electricity indicate that the public convenience and necessity require modification or revocation of the certificate. If the Commission finds that completion of the generating facility is no longer in the public interest, the Commission may modify or revoke the certificate.

(f) The public utility shall submit a progress report and any revision in the cost estimate for the construction approved under subsection (e) of this section during each year of construction. Upon the request of the public utility or upon its own motion, the Commission shall conduct an ongoing review of construction of the facility as the construction proceeds. In any such ongoing review process, the public utility shall submit an application, including detailed documentation and supporting testimony, demonstrating that the public utility's construction and related costs and expenditures incurred during the review period in connection with such certified generating facility were reasonable and prudently incurred and, if necessary, requesting a modification of the certificate. The purpose of each ongoing review hearing is to determine the reasonableness and prudence of the costs incurred by the public utility during the period under review and to determine

whether the certificate should remain in effect or be modified or revoked. The public utility shall have the burden of proof to demonstrate that all costs and expenditures were reasonable and prudently incurred. The Commission shall conduct a hearing regarding each such review period and shall allow intervention in such proceeding. Subject to any variation needed at the start or completion of construction, the review period for each proceeding shall be approximately 12 months of construction and related costs and expenditures. In addition, once the ongoing review process has been initiated, the public utility shall be required to submit quarterly status reports and the Public Staff shall be entitled to submit discovery with respect to such quarterly status reports. The Commission shall commence the hearing with respect to each review period within 120 days of the public utility's application and issue a decision within 60 days of the close of the hearing, or waiver thereof if no disputed issues have been identified. If the Commission approves any revised construction cost estimate, if applicable, and finds that incurrence of the cost of that portion of the construction of the facility under review was reasonable and prudent, the certificate shall remain in effect. If the Commission disapproves any part of the revised cost estimate or finds that the incurrence of the cost of that portion of the construction of the facility then under review was unreasonable or imprudent, the Commission may modify or revoke the certificate.

(f1) The public utility shall recover through rates in a general rate case conducted pursuant to G.S. 62-133 the actual costs it has incurred in constructing a generating facility in reliance on a certificate issued under this section as provided in this subsection, unless new evidence is discovered (i) that could not have been discovered by due diligence at an earlier time and (ii) that reasonably tends to show that a previous determination by the Commission that a material item of cost was just and reasonable and prudently incurred was erroneous. If the Commission determines that evidence has been submitted that meets the requirements of this subsection, the public utility shall have the burden of proof to demonstrate that the material item of cost was in fact just and reasonable and prudently incurred.

(1) When a facility has been completed, and the construction of the facility has been subject to ongoing review under subsection (f) of this section, the reasonable and prudent costs of construction approved by the Commission during the ongoing review shall be included in the public utility's rate base without further review by the Commission.

(2) If a facility has not been completed, and the construction of the facility has been subject to ongoing review under subsection (f) of this section, the reasonable and prudent costs of construction approved by the Commission during the ongoing review shall be included in the public utility's rate base without further review by the Commission.

(3) If a facility is under construction or has been completed and the construction of the facility has not been subject to ongoing review under subsection (f) of this section, the costs of construction shall be included in the public utility's rate base if the Commission finds that the incurrence of these costs is reasonable and prudent.

(f2) If the construction of a facility is cancelled, including cancellation as a result of modification or revocation of the certificate under subsection (e1) of this section, and the construction of the facility has been subject to ongoing review under subsection (f), absent newly discovered evidence (i) that could not have been discovered by due diligence at an earlier time and (ii) that reasonably tends to show that a previous determination by the Commission that a material item of cost was just and reasonable and prudently incurred was erroneous, the public utility shall

recover through rates in a general rate case conducted pursuant to G.S. 62-133 the costs of construction approved by the Commission during the ongoing review that were actually incurred prior to cancellation, amortized over a reasonable time as determined by the Commission. In the general rate case, the Commission shall make any adjustment that may be required because costs of construction previously added to the utility's rate base pursuant to subsection (f1) of this section are removed from the rate base and recovered in accordance with this subsection. Any costs of construction actually incurred, but not previously approved by the Commission, shall be recovered only if they are found by the Commission to be reasonable and prudent. If the Commission determines that evidence has been submitted that meets the requirements of this subsection, the public utility shall have the burden of proof to demonstrate that the material item of cost was just and reasonable and prudently incurred.

(f3) If the construction of a facility is cancelled, including cancellation as a result of the modification or revocation of the certificate under subsection (e1) of this section, and the construction of the facility has not been subject to ongoing review under subsection (f) of this section, the public utility shall recover through rates in a general rate case conducted pursuant to G.S. 62-133 the costs of construction that were actually incurred prior to the cancellation and are found by the Commission to be reasonable and prudent, amortized over a reasonable time as determined by the Commission. In the general rate case, the Commission shall make any adjustment that may be required because costs of construction previously added to the utility's rate base pursuant to subsection (f1) of this section are removed from the rate base and recovered in accordance with this subsection.

(g) The certification requirements of this section shall not apply to (i) a nonutility-owned generating facility fueled by clean energy resources under two megawatts in capacity; (ii) to persons who construct an electric generating facility primarily for that person's own use and not for the primary purpose of producing electricity, heat, or steam for sale to or for the public for compensation; or (iii) a solar energy facility or a community solar energy facility, as provided by and subject to the limitations of Article 6B of this Chapter. However, such persons shall be required to report the proposed construction of the facility and the completion of the facility to the Commission and the interconnecting public utility. Such reports shall be for informational purposes only and shall not require action by the Commission or the Public Staff.

(h) Expired pursuant to its own terms, effective January 1, 2011. (1965, c. 287, s. 2; 1975, c. 780, s. 1; 1979, c. 652, s. 2; 2007-397, s. 6; 2009-390, s. 1(b); 2013-187, s. 2; 2015-241, s. 14.30(u); 2015-264, s. 11; 2017-57, s. 14.1(o); 2017-192, s. 6(c); 2021-23, s. 12; 2023-138, s. 2; 2024-57, s. 3D.1(e); 2025-78, s. 2(a).)

§ 62-110.2. Electric service areas outside of municipalities.

(a) As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires, the term:

(1) "Premises" means the building, structure, or facility to which electricity is being or is to be furnished; provided, that two or more buildings, structures, or facilities which are located on one tract or contiguous tracts of land and are utilized by one electric consumer for commercial, industrial, institutional, or governmental purposes, shall together constitute one "premises," except that any such building, structure, or facility shall not, together with any other building, structure, or facility, constitute one "premises" if the electric service to it is separately metered and the charges for such service are calculated

independently of charges for service to any other building, structure, or facility; and

(2) "Line" means any conductor for the distribution or transmission of electricity, other than

a. In the case of overhead construction, a conductor from the pole nearest the premises of a consumer to such premises, or a conductor from a line tap to such premises, and

b. In the case of underground construction, a conductor from the transformer (or junction point, if there be one) nearest the premises of a consumer to such premises.

(3) "Electric supplier" means any public utility furnishing electric service or any electric membership corporation.

(b) In areas outside of municipalities, electric suppliers shall have rights and be subject to restrictions as follows:

(1) Every electric supplier shall have the right to serve all premises being served by it, or to which any of its facilities for service are attached, on April 20, 1965.

(2) Every electric supplier shall have the right, subject to subdivision (4) of this subsection, to serve all premises initially requiring electric service after April 20, 1965, which are located wholly within 300 feet of such electric supplier's lines as such lines exist on April 20, 1965, except premises which, on said date, are being served by another electric supplier or to which any of another electric supplier's facilities for service are attached.

(3) Every electric supplier shall have the right, subject to subdivision (4) of this subsection, to serve all premises initially requiring electric service after April 20, 1965, which are located wholly within 300 feet of lines that such electric supplier constructs after April 20, 1965, to serve consumers that it has the right to serve, except premises located wholly within a service area assigned to another electric supplier pursuant to subsection (c) hereof.

(4) Any premises initially requiring electric service after April 20, 1965, which are located wholly or partially within 300 feet of the lines of one electric supplier and also wholly or partially within 300 feet of the lines of another electric supplier, as each of such supplier's lines exist on April 20, 1965, or as extended to serve consumers that the supplier has the right to serve, may be served by such one of said electric suppliers which the consumer chooses, and any electric supplier not so chosen by the consumer shall not thereafter furnish service to such premises.

(5) Any premises initially requiring electric service after April 20, 1965, which are not located wholly within 300 feet of the lines of any electric supplier and are not located partially within 300 feet of the lines of two or more electric suppliers may be served by any electric supplier which the consumer chooses, unless such premises are located wholly or partially within an area assigned to an electric supplier pursuant to subsection (c) hereof, and any electric supplier not so chosen by the consumer shall not thereafter furnish service to such premises.

(6) Any premises initially requiring electric service after April 20, 1965, which are located partially within a service area assigned to one electric supplier and partially within a service area assigned to another electric supplier pursuant to

subsection (c) hereof, or are located partially within a service area assigned to one electric supplier pursuant to subsection (c) hereof and partially within 300 feet of the lines of another electric supplier, as such lines exist on April 20, 1965, or as extended to serve consumers it has the right to serve, may be served by such one of said electric suppliers which the consumer chooses, and the electric supplier not so chosen shall not thereafter furnish service to such premises.

(7) Any premises initially requiring electric service after April 20, 1965, which are located only partially within a service area assigned to one electric supplier pursuant to subsection (c) hereof and are located wholly outside the service areas assigned to other electric suppliers and are located wholly more than 300 feet from other electric suppliers' lines, may be served by any electric supplier which the consumer chooses, and any electric supplier not so chosen by the consumer shall not thereafter furnish service to such premises.

(8) Every electric supplier shall have the right to serve all premises located wholly within the service area assigned to it pursuant to subsection (c) hereof.

(9) No electric supplier shall furnish temporary electric service for the construction of premises which it would not have the right to serve under this subsection if such premises were already constructed. The construction of lines for, and the furnishing of, temporary service for the construction of premises which any other electric supplier, if chosen by the consumer, would have the right to serve if such premises were already constructed, shall not impair the right of such other electric supplier to furnish service to such premises after the construction thereof, if then chosen by the consumer; nor, unless the consumer chooses to have such premises served by the supplier which furnished the temporary service, shall the furnishing of such temporary service or the construction of a line therefor impair the right of any other electric supplier to furnish service to any other premises which, without regard to the construction of such temporary service line, it has the right to serve.

(10) No electric supplier shall furnish electric service to any premises in this State outside the limits of any incorporated city or town except as permitted by this section; provided, that nothing in this section shall restrict the right of an electric supplier to furnish electric service to itself or to exchange or interchange electric energy with, purchase electric energy from or sell electric energy to any other electric supplier.

(c) (1) In order to avoid unnecessary duplication of electric facilities, the Commission is authorized and directed to assign, as soon as practicable after January 1, 1966, to electric suppliers all areas, by adequately defined boundaries, that are outside the corporate limits of municipalities and that are more than 300 feet from the lines of all electric suppliers as such lines exist on the dates of the assignments; provided, that the Commission may leave unassigned any area in which the Commission, in its discretion, determines that the existing lines of two or more electric suppliers are in such close proximity that no substantial avoidance of duplication of facilities would be accomplished by assignment of such area. The Commission shall make assignments of areas in accordance with public convenience and necessity, considering, among other things, the location of

existing lines and facilities of electric suppliers and the adequacy and dependability of the service of electric suppliers, but not considering rate differentials among electric suppliers.

(2) The Commission, upon agreement of the affected electric suppliers, is authorized to reassign to one electric supplier any area or portion thereof theretofore assigned to another; and the Commission, notwithstanding the lack of such agreement, is authorized to reassign to one electric supplier any area or portion thereof theretofore assigned to another, except premises being served by the other electric supplier or to which any of its facilities for service are attached and except such portions of such area as are within 300 feet of the other electric supplier's lines, upon finding that such reassignment is required by public convenience and necessity. In determining whether public convenience and necessity requires such reassignment, the Commission shall consider, among other things, the adequacy and dependability of the service of the affected electric suppliers, but shall not consider rate differentials between such electric suppliers.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (b) and (c) of this section:

(1) Any electric supplier may furnish electric service to any consumer who desires service from such electric supplier at any premises being served by another electric supplier, or at premises which another electric supplier has the right to serve pursuant to other provisions of this section, upon agreement of the affected electric suppliers; and

(2) The Commission shall have the authority and jurisdiction, after notice to all affected electric suppliers and after hearing, if a hearing is requested by any affected electric supplier or any other interested party, to order any electric supplier which may reasonably do so to furnish electric service to any consumer who desires service from such electric supplier at any premises being served by another electric supplier, or at premises which another electric supplier has the right to serve pursuant to other provisions of this section, and to order such other electric supplier to cease and desist from furnishing electric service to such premises, upon finding that service to such consumer by the electric supplier which is then furnishing service, or which has the right to furnish service, to such premises, is or will be inadequate or undependable, or that the rates, conditions of service or service regulations, applied to such consumer, are unreasonably discriminatory.

(e) The furnishing of electric service in any area which becomes a part of any municipality after April 20, 1965, either by annexation or incorporation, (whether or not such area, or any portion thereof, shall have been assigned pursuant to subsection (c) of this section) shall be subject to the provisions of Part 2, Article 16 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, and any provisions of this section inconsistent with said Article shall not be applicable within such area after the effective date of such annexation or incorporation. (1965, c. 287, s. 5; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1024, s. 14.)

§ 62-110.3. Bond required for water and sewer companies.

(a) No franchise may be granted to any water or sewer utility company until the applicant furnishes a bond, secured with sufficient surety as approved by the Commission, in an amount not

less than twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000). The bond shall be conditioned upon providing adequate and sufficient service within all the applicant's service areas, including those for which franchises have previously been granted, shall be payable to the Commission, and shall be in a form acceptable to the Commission. In setting the amount of a bond, the Commission shall consider and make appropriate findings as to the following:

(1) Whether the applicant holds other water or sewer franchises in this State, and if so its record of operation,
(2) The number of customers the applicant now serves and proposes to serve,
(3) The likelihood of future expansion needs of the service,
(4) If the applicant is acquiring an existing company, the age, condition, and type of the equipment, and
(5) Any other relevant factors, including the design of the system.

Any interest earned on a bond shall be payable to the water or sewer company that posted the bond.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 62-110(a) and subsection (a) of this section, no water or sewer utility shall extend service into territory contiguous to that already occupied without first having advised the Commission of such proposed extension. Upon notification, the Commission shall require the utility to furnish an appropriate bond, taking into consideration both the original service area and the proposed extension. This subsection shall apply to all service areas of water and sewer utilities without regard to the date of the issuance of the franchise.

(c) The utility, the Public Staff, and any other party may, at any time after the amount of a bond is set, apply to the Commission to raise or lower the amount based on changed circumstances.

(d) The appointment of an emergency operator, either by the superior court in accordance with G.S. 62-118(b) or by the Commission in accordance with G.S. 62-116(b), operates to forfeit the bond required by this section. The court or Commission, as appropriate, shall determine the amount of money needed to alleviate the emergency and shall order that amount of the bond to be paid to the Commission as trustee for the water or sewer system.

(e) If the person who operated the system before the emergency was declared desires to resume operation of the system upon a finding that the emergency no longer exists, the Commission shall require him to post a new bond, the amount of which may be different from the previous bond. (1987, c. 490, s. 2; 1995, c. 28, s. 1; 2023-137, s. 24; 2024-57, s. 3D.1(f).)

§ 62-110.4. Alternative Operator Services.

The Commission shall not issue a certificate of public convenience and necessity pursuant to G.S. 62-110(b) to any interexchange carrier which the Commission has determined to have the characteristics of an alternative operator service unless the Commission shall have determined that class of interexchange carriers to be in the public interest and shall have promulgated rules to protect the public interest and to require, at a minimum, that any such interexchange carrier assure appropriate disclosure to end-users of its identity, services, rates, charges, and fees. In order to effectuate notice to end-users, the Commission may, notwithstanding any other provision of law, require that any person owning or operating a facility for the use of the travelling or transient public which has contracted with such an interexchange carrier prominently display an end-user notice provided for in the Commission's rules. (1989, c. 366.)

§ 62-110.5. Commission may exempt certain nonprofit and consumer-owned water or sewer utilities.

The Commission may exempt any water or sewer utilities owned by nonprofit membership or consumer-owned corporations from regulation under this Chapter, subject to those conditions the Commission deems appropriate, if:

(1) The members or consumer-owners of the corporation elect the governing board of the corporation pursuant to the corporation's articles of incorporation and bylaws; and

(2) The Commission finds that the organization and the quality of service of the utility are adequate to protect the public interest to the extent that additional regulation is not required by the public convenience and necessity. (1997-437, s. 2.)

§ 62-110.6. Rate recovery for construction costs of out-of-state electric generating facilities.

(a) The Commission shall, upon petition of a public utility, determine the need for and, if need is established, approve an estimate of the construction costs and construction schedule for an electric generating facility in another state that is intended to serve retail customers in this State.

(b) The petition may be filed at any time after an application for a certificate or license for the construction of the facility has been filed in the state in which the facility will be sited. The petition shall contain a showing of need for the facility, an estimate of the construction costs, and the proposed construction schedule for the facility.

(c) The Commission shall conduct a public hearing to consider and determine the need for the facility and the reasonableness of the construction cost estimate and proposed construction schedule. If the Commission finds that the construction will be needed to assure the provision of adequate public utility service within North Carolina, the Commission shall approve a construction cost estimate and a construction schedule for the facility. In making its determinations under this section, the Commission may consider whether the state in which the facility will be sited has issued a certificate or license for construction of the facility and approved a construction cost estimate and construction schedule for the facility. The Commission shall issue its order not later than 180 days after the public utility files its petition.

(d) G.S. 62-110.1(f) shall apply to the construction cost estimate determined by the Commission to be appropriate, and the actual costs the public utility incurs in constructing the facility shall be recoverable through rates in a general rate case pursuant to G.S. 62-133 as provided in G.S. 62-110.1(f1).

(e) If the construction of a facility is cancelled, the public utility shall recover through rates in a general rate case conducted pursuant to G.S. 62-133 the costs of construction that were actually incurred prior to the cancellation and are found by the Commission to be reasonable and prudent, as provided in subsections (f2) and (f3) of G.S. 62-110.1. (2007-397, s. 7.)

§ 62-110.7. Project development cost review for a nuclear facility.

(a) For purposes of this section, "project development costs" mean all capital costs associated with a potential nuclear electric generating facility incurred before (i) issuance of a certificate under G.S. 62-110.1 for a facility located in North Carolina or (ii) issuance of a certificate by the host state for an out-of-state facility to serve North Carolina retail customers, including, without limitation, the costs of evaluation, design, engineering, environmental analysis and permitting, early site permitting, combined operating license permitting, initial site preparation costs, and allowance for funds used during construction associated with such costs.

(b) At any time prior to the filing of an application for a certificate to construct a potential nuclear electric generating facility, either under G.S. 62-110.1 or in another state for a facility to serve North Carolina retail customers, a public utility may request that the Commission review the public utility's decision to incur project development costs. The public utility shall include with its request such information and documentation as is necessary to support approval of the decision to incur proposed project development costs. The Commission shall hold a hearing regarding the request. The Commission shall issue an order within 180 days after the public utility files its request. The Commission shall approve the public utility's decision to incur project development costs if the public utility demonstrates by a preponderance of evidence that the decision to incur project development costs is reasonable and prudent; provided, however, the Commission shall not rule on the reasonableness or prudence of specific project development activities or recoverability of specific items of cost.

(c) All reasonable and prudent project development costs, as determined by the Commission, incurred for the potential nuclear electric generating facility shall be included in the public utility's rate base and shall be fully recoverable through rates in a general rate case proceeding pursuant to G.S. 62-133.

(d) If the public utility is allowed to cancel the project, the Commission shall permit the public utility to recover all reasonable and prudently incurred project development costs in a general rate case proceeding pursuant to G.S. 62-133 amortized over a period equal to the period during which the costs were incurred, or five years, whichever is greater. (2007-397, s. 7.)

§ 62-110.8. Competitive procurement of renewable energy.

(a) Each electric public utility shall file for Commission approval a program for the competitive procurement of energy and capacity from renewable energy facilities with the purpose of adding renewable energy to the State's generation portfolio in a manner that allows the State's electric public utilities to continue to reliably and cost-effectively serve customers' future energy needs. Renewable energy facilities eligible to participate in the competitive procurement shall include those facilities that use renewable energy resources identified in G.S. 62-133.8(a)(8) but shall be limited to facilities with a nameplate capacity rating of 80 megawatts (MW) or less that are placed in service after the date of the electric public utility's initial competitive procurement. Subject to the limitations set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of this section, the electric public utilities shall issue requests for proposals to procure and shall procure, energy and capacity from renewable energy facilities in the aggregate amount of 2,660 megawatts (MW), and the total amount shall be reasonably allocated over a term of 45 months beginning when the Commission approves the program. The Commission shall require the additional competitive procurement of renewable energy capacity by the electric public utilities in an amount that includes all of the following: (i) any unawarded portion of the initial competitive procurement required by this subsection; (ii) any deficit in renewable energy capacity identified pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this section; and (iii) any capacity reallocated pursuant to G.S. 62-159.2.

(b) Electric public utilities may jointly or individually implement the aggregate competitive procurement requirements set forth in subsection (a) of this section and may satisfy such requirements for the procurement of renewable energy capacity to be supplied by renewable energy facilities through any of the following: (i) renewable energy facilities to be acquired from third parties and subsequently owned and operated by the soliciting public utility or utilities; (ii) renewable energy facilities to be constructed, owned, and operated by the soliciting public utility or utilities subject to the limitations of subdivision (4) of this subsection; or (iii) the purchase of

renewable energy, capacity, and environmental and renewable attributes from renewable energy facilities owned and operated by third parties that commit to allow the procuring public utility rights to dispatch, operate, and control the solicited renewable energy facilities in the same manner as the utility's own generating resources. Procured renewable energy capacity, as provided for in this section, shall be subject to the following limitations:

(1) If prior to the end of the initial 45-month competitive procurement period the public utilities subject to this section have executed power purchase agreements and interconnection agreements for renewable energy capacity within their balancing authority areas that are not subject to economic dispatch or curtailment and were not procured pursuant to G.S. 62-159.2 having an aggregate capacity in excess of 3,500 megawatts (MW), the Commission shall reduce the competitive procurement aggregate amount by the amount of such exceedance. If the aggregate capacity of such renewable energy facilities is less than 3,500 megawatts (MW) at the end of the initial 45-month competitive procurement period, the Commission shall require the electric public utilities to conduct an additional competitive procurement in the amount of such deficit.

(2) To ensure the cost-effectiveness of procured new renewable energy resources, each public utility's procurement obligation shall be capped by the public utility's current forecast of its avoided cost calculated over the term of the power purchase agreement. The public utility's current forecast of its avoided cost shall be consistent with the Commission-approved avoided cost methodology.

(3) Each public utility shall submit to the Commission for approval and make publicly available at 30 days prior to each competitive procurement solicitation a pro forma contract to be utilized for the purpose of informing market participants of terms and conditions of the competitive procurement. Each pro forma contract shall define limits and compensation for resource dispatch and curtailments. The pro forma contract shall be for a term of 20 years; provided, however, the Commission may approve a contract term of a different duration if the Commission determines that it is in the public interest to do so.

(4) No more than thirty percent (30%) of an electric public utility's competitive procurement requirement may be satisfied through the utility's own development of renewable energy facilities offered by the electric public utility or any subsidiary of the electric public utility that is located within the electric public utility's service territory. This limitation shall not apply to any renewable energy facilities acquired by an electric public utility that are selected through the competitive procurement and are located within the electric public utility's service territory.

(c) Subject to the aggregate competitive procurement requirements established by this section, the electric public utilities shall have the authority to determine the location and allocated amount of the competitive procurement within their respective balancing authority areas, whether located inside or outside the geographic boundaries of the State, taking into consideration (i) the State's desire to foster diversification of siting of renewable energy resources throughout the State; (ii) the efficiency and reliability impacts of siting of additional renewable energy facilities in each public utility's service territory; and (iii) the potential for increased delivered cost to a public utility's customers as a result of siting additional renewable energy facilities in a public utility's service territory, including additional costs of ancillary services that may be imposed due to the

operational or locational characteristics of a specific renewable energy resource technology, such as nondispatchability, unreliability of availability, and creation or exacerbation of system congestion that may increase redispatch costs.

(d) The competitive procurement of renewable energy capacity established pursuant to this section shall be independently administered by a third-party entity to be approved by the Commission. The third-party entity shall develop and publish the methodology used to evaluate responses received pursuant to a competitive procurement solicitation and to ensure that all responses are treated equitably. All reasonable and prudent administrative and related expenses incurred to implement this subsection shall be recovered from market participants through administrative fees levied upon those that participate in the competitive bidding process, as approved by the Commission.

(e) An electric public utility may participate in any competitive procurement process, but shall only participate within its own assigned service territory. If the public utility uses nonpublicly available information concerning its own distribution or transmission system in preparing a proposal to a competitive procurement, the public utility shall make such information available to third parties that have notified the public utility of their intention to submit a proposal to the same request for proposals.

(f) For purposes of this section, the term "balancing authority" means the entity that integrates resource plans ahead of time, maintains load-interchange-generation balance within a balancing authority area, and supports interconnection frequency in real time, and the term "balancing authority area" means the collection of generation, transmission, and loads within the metered boundaries of the balancing authority, and the balancing authority maintains load-resource balance within this area.

(g) An electric public utility shall be authorized to recover the costs of all purchases of energy, capacity, and environmental and renewable attributes from third-party renewable energy facilities and to recover the authorized revenue of any utility-owned assets that are procured pursuant to this section through an annual rider approved by the Commission and reviewed annually. Provided it is in the public interest, the authorized revenue for any renewable energy facilities owned by an electric public utility may be calculated on a market basis in lieu of cost-of-service based recovery, using data from the applicable competitive procurement to determine the market price in accordance with the methodology established by the Commission pursuant to subsection (h) of this section. The annual increase in the aggregate amount of these costs that are recoverable by an electric public utility pursuant to this subsection shall not exceed one percent (1%) of the electric public utility's total North Carolina retail jurisdictional gross revenues for the preceding calendar year.

(h) The Commission shall adopt rules to implement the requirements of this section, as follows:

(1) Oversight of the competitive procurement program.

(2) To provide for a waiver of regulatory conditions or code of conduct requirements that would unreasonably restrict a public utility or its affiliates from participating in the competitive procurement process, unless the Commission finds that such a waiver would not hold the public utility's customers harmless.

(3) Establishment of a procedure for expedited review and approval of certificates of public convenience and necessity, or the transfer thereof, for renewable energy facilities owned by the public utility and procured pursuant to this

section. The Commission shall issue an order not later than 30 days after a petition for a certificate is filed by the public utility.

(4) Establishment of a methodology to allow an electric public utility to recover its costs pursuant to subsection (g) of this section.

(5) Repealed by Session Laws 2021-165, s. 2(b), effective October 13, 2021.

(i) The requirements of this section shall not apply to an electric public utility serving fewer than 150,000 North Carolina retail jurisdictional customers as of January 1, 2017. (2017-192, s. 2(a); 2021-165, s. 2(a), (b).)

§ 62-110.9. Requirements concerning reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide from electric public utilities.

The Utilities Commission shall take all reasonable steps to achieve reduction in emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) emitted in the State from electric generating facilities owned or operated by electric public utilities that result in carbon neutrality by the year 2050. For purposes of this section, (i) "electric public utility" means any electric public utility as defined in G.S. 62-3(23) serving at least 150,000 North Carolina retail jurisdictional customers as of January 1, 2021, and (ii) "carbon neutrality" means for every ton of CO2 emitted in the State from electric generating facilities owned or operated by or on behalf of electric public utilities, an equivalent amount of CO2 is reduced, removed, prevented, or offset, provided that the offsets are verifiable and do not exceed five percent (5%) of the authorized reduction goal. In achieving the authorized carbon reduction goal, the Utilities Commission shall:

(1) Develop a plan, no later than December 31, 2026, with the electric public utilities, including stakeholder input, for the utilities to achieve the authorized reduction goal of carbon neutrality by the year 2050, which may, at a minimum, consider power generation, transmission and distribution, grid modernization, storage, energy efficiency measures, demand-side management, and the latest technological breakthroughs to achieve the least cost path consistent with this section to achieve compliance with the authorized carbon reduction goal (the "Carbon Plan"). The Carbon Plan shall be reviewed every two years and may be adjusted as necessary in the determination of the Commission and the electric public utilities.

(2) Comply with current law and practice with respect to the least cost planning for generation, pursuant to G.S. 62-2(a)(3a), in achieving the authorized carbon reduction goal and determining generation and resource mix for the future. Any new generation facilities or other resources selected by the Commission in order to achieve the authorized reduction goal for electric public utilities shall be owned and recovered on a cost of service basis by the applicable electric public utility except that:

a. Existing law shall apply with respect to energy efficiency measures and demand-side management.

b. To the extent that new solar generation is selected by the Commission, in adherence with least cost requirements, the solar generation selected shall be subject to the following: (i) forty-five percent (45%) of the total megawatts alternating current (MW AC) of any solar energy facilities established pursuant to this section shall be supplied through the execution of power purchase agreements with third parties pursuant to

which the electric public utility purchases solar energy, capacity, and environmental and renewable attributes from solar energy facilities owned and operated by third parties that are 80 MW AC or less that commit to allow the procuring electric public utility rights to dispatch, operate, and control the solicited solar energy facilities in the same manner as the utility's own generating resources and (ii) fifty-five percent (55%) of the total MW AC of any solar energy facilities established pursuant to this section shall be supplied from solar energy facilities that are utility-built or purchased by the utility from third parties and owned and operated and recovered on a cost of service basis by the soliciting electric public utility. These ownership requirements shall be applicable to solar energy facilities (i) paired with energy storage and (ii) procured in connection with any voluntary customer program.

(3) Ensure any generation and resource changes maintain or improve upon the adequacy and reliability of the existing grid.

(4) Retain discretion to determine optimal timing and generation and resource-mix to achieve the least cost path to compliance with the authorized carbon reduction goal, including discretion in achieving the authorized carbon reduction goal by the date specified in order to allow for implementation of solutions that would have a more significant and material impact on carbon reduction; provided, however, the Commission shall not exceed the date specified to achieve the authorized carbon reduction goal by more than two years, except in the event the Commission authorizes construction of a nuclear facility or wind energy facility that would require additional time for completion due to technical, legal, logistical, or other factors beyond the control of the electric public utility, or in the event necessary to maintain the adequacy and reliability of the existing grid. In making such determinations, the Utilities Commission shall receive and consider stakeholder input. (2021-165, s. 1; 2025-78, s. 1.)

§ 62-111. Transfers of franchises; mergers, consolidations and combinations of public utilities.

(a) No franchise now existing or hereafter issued under the provisions of this Chapter other than a franchise for motor carriers of passengers shall be sold, assigned, pledged or transferred, nor shall control thereof be changed through stock transfer or otherwise, or any rights thereunder leased, nor shall any merger or combination affecting any public utility be made through acquisition of control by stock purchase or otherwise, except after application to and written approval by the Commission, which approval shall be given if justified by the public convenience and necessity. Provided, that the above provisions shall not apply to regular trading in listed securities on recognized markets.

(b) No certificates issued under the provisions of this Chapter for motor carriers of passengers shall be sold, assigned, pledged, transferred, or control changed through stock transfer or otherwise, or any rights thereunder leased, nor shall any merger or combination affecting any motor carrier of passengers be made through acquisition of control by stock purchases or otherwise, except after application to and written approval by the Commission as in this section

provided, provided that the above provisions shall not apply to regular trading in listing securities on recognized markets. The applicant shall give not less than 10 days' written notice of such application by registered mail or by certified mail to all connecting and competing carriers. When the Commission is of the opinion that the transaction is consistent with the purposes of this Chapter the Commission may, in the exercise of its discretion, grant its approval, provided, however, that when such transaction will result in a substantial change in the service and operations of any motor carrier of passengers party to the transaction, or will substantially affect the operations and services of any other motor carrier, the Commission shall not grant its approval except upon notice and hearing as required in G.S. 62-262.1 for bus companies upon an application for an original certificate. In all cases arising under the subsection it shall be the duty of the Commission to require the successor carrier to satisfy the Commission that the operating debts and obligations of the seller, assignor, pledgor, lessor or transferor, including taxes due the State of North Carolina or any political subdivision thereof are paid or the payment thereof is adequately secured. The Commission may attach to its approval of any transaction arising under the section such other conditions as the Commission may determine are necessary to effectuate the purposes of this Article.

(c) No sale of a franchise for a motor carrier of household goods shall be approved by the Commission until the seller shall have filed with the Commission a statement under oath of all debts and claims against the seller, of which such seller has any knowledge or notice, (i) for gross receipts, use or privilege taxes due or to become due the State, as provided in the Revenue Act, (ii) for wages due employees of the seller, other than salaries of officers and in the case of motor carriers, (iii) for unremitted C.O.D. collections due shippers, (iv) for loss of or damage to goods transported, or received for transportation, (v) for overcharges on property transported, and, (vi) for interline accounts due other carriers, together with a bond, if required by the Commission, payable to the State, executed by a surety company authorized to do business in the State, in an amount double the aggregate of all such debts and claims conditioned upon the payment of the same within the amount of such bond as the amounts and validity of such debts and claims are established by agreement of the parties, or by judgment. This subsection shall not be applicable to sales by personal representatives of deceased or incompetent persons, receivers or trustees in bankruptcy under court order.

(d) No person shall obtain a franchise or certificate for the purpose of transferring the same to another, and an offer of such transfer within one year after the same was obtained shall be prima facie evidence that such franchise or certificate was obtained for the purpose of sale.

(e) The Commission shall approve applications for transfer of motor carrier franchises made under this section upon finding that said sale, assignment, pledge, transfer, change of control, lease, merger, or combination is in the public interest, will not adversely affect the service to the public under said franchise, will not unlawfully affect the service to the public by other public utilities, that the person acquiring said franchise or control thereof is fit, willing and able to perform such service to the public under said franchise, and that service under said franchise has been continuously offered to the public up to the time of filing said application or in lieu thereof that any suspension of service exceeding 30 days has been approved by the Commission as provided in G.S. 62-112(b)(5). Provided, however, the Commission shall approve, without imposing conditions or limitations, applications for the transfer of a bus company franchise made under this section upon finding that the person acquiring the franchise or control of the franchise is fit, willing and able to perform services to the public under that franchise.

(f) The following provisions apply to an application for the grant or transfer of a certificate of public convenience and necessity for a water or wastewater system:

(1) Within 30 days of the filing of such application, the Commission shall (i) determine whether or not the application is complete and notify the applicant accordingly and (ii) if the Commission determines an application is incomplete, specify all such deficiencies in the notice to the applicant. The applicant may file an amended application or supplemental information to cure the deficiencies identified by the Commission for the Commission's review. If the Commission fails to issue a notice as to whether or not the application is complete within the requisite 30-day period, the application shall be deemed complete. Within 300 days of the filing of a completed application, the Commission shall issue an order approving the application upon finding that the proposed grant or transfer, including adoption of existing or proposed rates for the transferring utility, is in the public interest, will not adversely affect service to the public under any existing franchise, and the person acquiring said franchise or certificate of public convenience and necessity has the technical, managerial, and financial capabilities necessary to provide public utility service to the public. The requirements of this subdivision shall apply to any applications for grants or transfers of a water or wastewater system sought as a result of a proposed sale of a privately owned water or wastewater system to a public or private entity, except with respect to those applications governed by subdivision (2) of this subsection.

(2) Within 30 days of the filing of such application, the Commission shall (i) determine whether or not the application is complete and notify the applicant accordingly and (ii) if the Commission determines an application is incomplete, specify all such deficiencies in the notice to the applicant. The applicant may file an amended application or supplemental information to cure the deficiencies identified by the Commission for the Commission's review. If the Commission fails to issue a notice as to whether or not the application is complete within the requisite 30-day period, the application shall be deemed complete. Within 210 days of the filing of a completed application, the Commission shall issue an order approving the application upon finding that the proposed grant or transfer, including adoption of existing or proposed rates for the transferring utility, is in the public interest, will not adversely affect service to the public under any existing franchise, and the person acquiring said franchise or certificate of public convenience and necessity has the technical, managerial, and financial capabilities necessary to provide public utility service to the public. The requirements of this subdivision shall apply to any applications for grants or transfers of a water or wastewater system sought as a result of a proposed sale of a privately owned water or wastewater system to a public or private entity, where the water or wastewater system has an unresolved notice of violation issued by the Department of Environmental Quality within the 24-month period immediately preceding the date of application.

(3) Prior to submittal of an application, and within 90 days of entering into an offer to purchase agreement for a water or wastewater system, a proposed purchaser

shall have a pre-application conference with the Commission and Public Staff to clarify application requirements, information on assets that must be provided, and associated matters.

(4) An applicant for the grant or transfer of a certificate of public convenience and necessity for a water or wastewater system may waive any deadline for determination of an application's completeness, or issuance of an order approving an application, set forth in subdivision (1) or (2) of this subsection. (1947, c. 1008, s. 22; 1949, c. 1132, s. 20; 1953, c. 1140, s. 3; 1957, c. 1152, s. 10; 1961, c. 472, ss. 6, 7; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1967, c. 1202; 1985, c. 676, ss. 10, 11; 1995, c. 523, s. 2; 2021-23, s. 13; 2023-67, s. 1(a).)

§ 62-112. Effective date, suspension and revocation of franchises; dormant motor carrier franchises.

(a) Franchises shall be effective from the date issued unless otherwise specified therein, and shall remain in effect until terminated under the terms thereof, or until suspended or revoked as herein provided.

(b) Any franchise may be suspended or revoked, in whole or in part, in the discretion of the Commission, upon application of the holder thereof; or, after notice and hearing, may be suspended or revoked, in whole or in part, upon complaint, or upon the Commission's own initiative, for wilful failure to comply with any provision of this Chapter, or with any lawful order, rule, or regulation of the Commission promulgated thereunder, or with any term, condition or limitation of such franchise; provided, however, that any such franchise may be suspended by the Commission upon notice to the holder or lessee thereof without a hearing for any one or more of the following causes:

(1) For failure to provide and keep in force at all times security, bond, insurance or self-insurance for the protection of the public as required in G.S. 62-268 of this Chapter.

(2) For failure to file and keep on file with the Commission applicable tariffs or schedules of rates as required in this Chapter.

(3) For failure to pay any gross receipts, use or privilege taxes due the State of North Carolina within 30 days after demand in writing from the agency of the State authorized by law to collect the same; provided, that this subdivision shall not apply to instances in which there is a bona fide controversy as to tax liability.

(4) For failure for a period of 60 days after execution to pay any final judgment rendered by a court of competent jurisdiction against any holder or lessee of a franchise for any debt or claim specified in G.S. 62-111(b) and (c).

(5) For failure to begin operations as authorized by the Commission within the time specified by order of the Commission, or for suspension of authorized operations for a period of 30 days without the written consent of the Commission, save in the case of involuntary failure or suspension brought about by compulsion upon the franchise holder or lessee.

(c) The failure of a common carrier of passengers or household goods by motor vehicles to perform any transportation for compensation under the authority of its certificate for a period of 30 consecutive days shall be prima facie evidence that said franchise is dormant and the public convenience and necessity is no longer served by such common carrier certificate. Upon finding after notice and hearing that no such service has been performed for a period of 30 days the Commission is authorized to find that the franchise is dormant and to cancel the certificate of such

common carrier. The Commission in its discretion may give consideration in such finding to other factors affecting the performance of such service, including seasonal requirements of the passengers or commodities authorized to be transported, the efforts of the carrier to make its services known to the public, the equipment and other facilities maintained by the carrier for performance of such service, and the means by which such carrier holds itself out to perform such service. A proceeding may be brought under this section by the Commission on its own motion or upon the complaint of any shipper or any other carrier. The franchise of a motor carrier may be canceled under the provisions of this section in any proceeding to sell or transfer or otherwise change control of said franchise brought under the provisions of G.S. 62-111, upon finding of dormancy as provided in this section. Any motor carrier who has obtained authority to suspend operations under the provisions of G.S. 62-112(b)(5) and the rules of the Utilities Commission issued thereunder shall not be subject to cancellation of its franchise under this section during the time such suspension of operations is authorized. In determining whether such carrier has made reasonable efforts to perform service under said franchise the Commission may in its discretion give consideration to disabilities of the carrier including death of the owner and physical disabilities.

(d) This section shall be applicable to bus companies. (1947, c. 1008, s. 23; 1949, c. 1132, s. 21; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1967, c. 1201; 1985, c. 676, s. 12; 1995, c. 523, s. 3.)

§ 62-113. Terms and conditions of franchises.

(a) Each franchise shall specify the service to be rendered and the routes over which, the fixed termini, if any, between which, and the intermediate and off-route points, if any, at which, and in case of operations not over specified routes or between fixed termini, the territory within which, a motor carrier or other public utility is authorized to operate: and there shall, at the time of issuance and from time to time thereafter, be attached to the privileges granted by the franchise such reasonable terms, conditions, and limitations as the public convenience and necessity may from time to time require, including terms, conditions, and limitations as to the extension of the route or routes of a carrier, and such terms and conditions as are necessary to carry out, with respect to the operations of a carrier or other public utility, the requirements established by the Commission under this Chapter; provided, however, that no terms, conditions, or limitations shall restrict the right of a motor carrier of household goods only to add to its equipment and facilities over the routes, between the termini, or within the territory specified in the franchises, as the development of the business and the demands of the public shall require. This subsection shall not be applicable to bus companies or their franchises.

(b) Each bus company franchise shall specify the fixed routes over which, and the fixed termini, if any, between which the bus company may operate. A franchise for bus companies engaged in charter operations may provide for fixed routes or statewide operating authority.

(c) Any broadband service provider that provides voice grade communication services within a defined service territory or franchise area, and elects to provide broadband service in areas contiguous to its service territory or franchise area, may provide such voice grade service as an incident to such broadband service to a customer when the incumbent telecommunications or cable provider is not currently providing broadband service to the customer, without violating its service territory restrictions or franchise agreement. (1947, c. 1008, s. 12; 1949, c. 1132, s. 11; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1985, c. 676, s. 13; 1995, c. 523, s. 4; 2009-80, s. 1.)

§ 62-114: Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 523, s. 5.

§ 62-115. Issuance of partnership franchises.

No franchise shall be issued under this Article to two or more persons until the persons have executed a partnership agreement, filed a copy of the agreement with the Commission, and indicated to the Commission, in writing, that they have complied with Article 14A of Chapter 66 of the General Statutes relating to engaging in business under an assumed business name. (1947, c. 1008, s. 14; 1949, c. 1132, s. 14; 1961, c. 472, s. 5; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 2016-100, s. 8.)

§ 62-116. Issuance of temporary or emergency authority.

(a) Upon the filing of an application in good faith for a franchise, the Commission may in its discretion, after notice by regular mail to all persons holding franchises authorizing similar services within the same territory and upon a finding that no other adequate existing service is available, pending its final decision on the application, issue to the applicant appropriate temporary authority to operate under such just and reasonable conditions and limitations as the Commission deems necessary or desirable to impose in the public interest; provided, however, that pending such final decision on the application, the applicant shall comply with all the provisions of this Chapter, and with the lawful orders, rules and regulations of the Commission promulgated thereunder, applicable to holders of franchises, and upon failure of an applicant so to do, after reasonable notice from the Commission requiring compliance therewith in the particulars set out in the notice, and after hearing, the application may be dismissed by the Commission without further proceedings, and temporary authority issued to such applicant may be revoked. The authority granted under this section shall not create any presumption nor be considered in the action on the permanent authority application.

(b) Upon its own initiative, or upon written request by any customer or by any representative of a local or State government agency, and after issuance of notice to the owner and operator and after hearing in accordance with G.S. 1A-1, Rule 65(b), the Commission may grant emergency operating authority to any person to furnish water or sewer utility service to meet an emergency to the extent necessary to relieve the emergency; provided, that the Commission shall find from such request, or from its own knowledge, that a real emergency exists and that the relief authorized is immediate, pressing and necessary in the public interest, and that the person so authorized has the necessary ability and is willing to perform the prescribed emergency service. Upon termination of the emergency, the emergency operating authority so granted shall expire upon order of the Commission. An emergency is defined herein as the imminent danger of losing adequate water or sewer utility service or the actual loss thereof. (1947, c. 1008, s. 10; 1949, c. 1132, s. 9; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1973, c. 1108.)

§ 62-117. Same or similar names prohibited.

No public utility holding or operating under a franchise issued under this Chapter shall adopt or use a name used by any other public utility, or any name so similar to a name of another public utility as to mislead or confuse the public, and the Commission may, upon complaint, or upon its own initiative, in any such case require the public utility to discontinue the use of such name, preference being given to the public utility first adopting and using such name. (1947, c. 1008, s. 15; 1949, c. 1132, s. 15; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-118. Abandonment and reduction of service.

(a) Upon finding that public convenience and necessity are no longer served, or that there is no reasonable probability of a public utility realizing sufficient revenue from a service to meet its expenses, the Commission shall have power, after petition and notice, to authorize by order any public utility to abandon or reduce such service. Upon request from any party having an interest in said utility service, the Commission shall hold a public hearing on such petition, and may on its own motion hold a public hearing on such petition. Provided, however, that abandonment or reduction of service of motor carriers shall not be subject to this section, but shall be authorized only under the provisions of G.S. 62-262(k) and G.S. 62-262.2.

(b) If any person or corporation furnishing water or sewer utility service under this Chapter shall abandon such service without the prior consent of the Commission, and the Commission subsequently finds that such abandonment of service causes an emergency to exist, the Commission may, unless the owner or operator of the affected system consents, apply in accordance with G.S. 1A-1, Rule 65, to a superior court judge who has jurisdiction pursuant to G.S. 7A-47.1 or 7A-48 in the district or set of districts as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1 in which the person or corporation so operates, for an order restricting the lands, facilities and rights-of-way used in furnishing said water or sewer utility service to continued use in furnishing said service during the period of the emergency. An emergency is defined herein as the imminent danger of losing adequate water or sewer utility service or the actual loss thereof. The court shall have jurisdiction to restrict the lands, facilities, and rights-of-way to continued use in furnishing said water or sewer utility service by appropriate order restraining their being placed to other use, or restraining their being prevented from continued use in furnishing said water or sewer utility service, by any person, corporation, or their representatives. The court may, in its discretion, appoint an emergency operator to assure the continued operation of such water or sewer utility service. The court shall have jurisdiction to require that reasonable compensation be paid to the owner, operator or other party entitled thereto for the use of any lands, facilities, and rights-of-way which are so restricted to continued use for furnishing water or sewer utility service during the period of the emergency, and it may require the emergency operator of said lands, facilities, and rights-of-way to post bond in an amount required by the court. In no event shall such compensation, for each month awarded, exceed the net average monthly income of the utility for the 12-month period immediately preceding the order restricting use.

(c) Whenever the Commission, upon complaint or investigation upon its own motion, finds that the facilities being used to furnish water or sewer utility service are inadequate to such an extent that an emergency (as defined in G.S. 62-118(b) above) exists, and further finds that there is no reasonable probability of the owner or operator of such utility obtaining the capital necessary to improve or replace the facilities from sources other than the customers, the Commission shall have the power, after notice and hearing, to authorize by order that such service be abandoned or reduced to those customers who are unwilling or unable to advance their fair share of the capital necessary for such improvements. The amount of capital to be advanced by each customer shall be subject to approval by the Commission, and shall be advanced under such conditions as will enable each customer to retain a proprietary interest in the system to the extent of the capital so advanced. The remedy prescribed in this subsection is in addition to other remedies prescribed by law. (1933, c. 307, s. 32; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1971, c. 552, s. 1; 1973, c. 1393; 1985, c. 676, s. 14; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 93; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1024, s. 15.)

Article 6A.

Radio Common Carriers.

§§ 62-119 through 62-125: Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 523, s. 31.

§ 62-126: Reserved for future codification purposes.

Article 6B.

Distributed Resources Access Act.

§ 62-126.1. Title.

This Article may be cited as the "Distributed Resources Access Act." (2017-192, s. 6(a).)

§ 62-126.2. Declaration of policy.

The General Assembly of North Carolina finds that as a matter of public policy it is in the interest of the State to encourage the leasing of solar energy facilities for retail customers and subscription to shared community solar energy facilities. The General Assembly further finds and declares that in encouraging the leasing of and subscription to solar energy facilities pursuant to this act, cross-subsidization should be avoided by holding harmless electric public utilities' customers that do not participate in such arrangements. (2017-192, s. 6(a).)

§ 62-126.3. Definitions.

For purposes of this Article, the following definitions apply:

(1) Affiliate. – Any entity directly or indirectly controlling or controlled by or under direct or indirect common control with an electric power supplier.

(2) Commission. – The North Carolina Utilities Commission.

(3) Community solar energy facility. – A solar energy facility whose output is shared through subscriptions.

(4) Customer generator lessee. – A lessee of a solar energy facility.

(5) Electric generator lessor. – The owner of solar energy facility that leases the facility to a customer generator lessee, including any agents who act on behalf of the electric generator lessor. For purposes of this Article, an electric generator lessor shall not be considered a public utility under G.S. 62-3(23).

(6) Electric power supplier. – A public utility, an electric membership corporation, or a municipality that sells electric power to retail electric customers in the State.

(7) Electric public utility. – A public utility as defined by G.S. 62-3(23) that sells electric power to retail electric customers in the State.

(8) Maximum annual peak demand. – The maximum single hour of electric demand actually occurring or estimated to occur at a premises.

(9) Net metering. – To use electrical metering equipment to measure the difference between the electrical energy supplied to a retail electric customer by an electric power supplier and the electrical energy supplied by the retail electric customer to the electric power supplier over the applicable billing period.

(10) Offering utility. – Any electric public utility as defined in G.S. 62-3(23) serving at least 150,000 North Carolina retail jurisdictional customers as of January 1, 2017. The term shall not include any other electric public utility, electric membership corporation, or municipal electric supplier authorized to provide retail electric service within the State. An offering utility's participation in this Article as an electric generator lessor shall not otherwise alter its status as a

public utility with respect to any other provision of this Chapter. An offering utility's participation in this Article shall be regulated pursuant to the provisions of this Article.

(11) Person. – The same meaning as provided by G.S. 62-3(21).

(12) Premises. – The building, structure, farm, or facility to which electricity is being or is to be furnished. Two or more buildings, structures, farms, or facilities that are located on one tract or contiguous tracts of land and that are utilized by one electric customer for commercial, industrial, institutional, or governmental purposes shall constitute one "premises," unless the electric service to the building, structures, farms, or facilities are separately metered and charged.

(13) Property. – The tract of land on which the premises is located, together with all the adjacent contiguous tracts of land utilized by the same retail electric customer.

(14) Solar energy facility. – A electric generating facility leased to a customer generator lessee that meets the following requirements:

a. Generates electricity from a solar photovoltaic system and related equipment that uses solar energy to generate electricity.

b. Is limited to a capacity of (i) not more than the lesser of 1,000 kilowatts (kW) or one hundred percent (100%) of contract demand if a nonresidential customer or (ii) not more than 20 kilowatts (kW) or one hundred percent (100%) of estimated electrical demand if a residential customer.

c. Is located on a premises owned, operated, leased, or otherwise controlled by the customer generator lessee that is also the premises served by the solar energy facility.

d. Is interconnected and operates in parallel phase and synchronization with an offering utility authorized by the Commission to provide retail electric service to the premises and has been approved for interconnection and parallel operation by that public utility.

e. Is intended only to offset no more than one hundred percent (100%) of the customer generator lessee's own retail electrical energy consumption at the premises.

f. Meets all applicable safety, performance, interconnection, and reliability standards established by the Commission, the public utility, the National Electrical Code, the National Electrical Safety Code, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Underwriters Laboratories, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and any local governing authorities.

(15) Subscription. – A contract between a subscriber and the owner of a community solar energy facility that allows a subscriber to receive a bill credit for the electricity generated by a community solar energy facility in proportion to the electricity generated. (2017-192, s. 6(a).)

§ 62-126.4. Commission to establish net metering rates.

(a) Each electric public utility shall file for Commission approval revised net metering rates for electric customers that (i) own a renewable energy facility for that person's own primary use or (ii) are customer generator lessees.

(b) The rates shall be nondiscriminatory and established only after an investigation of the costs and benefits of customer-sited generation. The Commission shall establish net metering rates under all tariff designs that ensure that the net metering retail customer pays its full fixed cost of service. Such rates may include fixed monthly energy and demand charges.

(c) Until the rates have been approved by the Commission as required by this section, the rate shall be the applicable net metering rate in place at the time the facility interconnects. Retail customers that own and install an on-site renewable energy facility and interconnect to the grid prior to the date the Commission approves new metering rates may elect to continue net metering under the net metering rate in effect at the time of interconnection until January 1, 2027. (2017-192, s. 6(a).)

§ 62-126.5. Scope of leasing program in offering utilities' service areas.

(a) An offering utility and its affiliates may be deemed to be electric generator lessors and may offer leases to solar energy facilities only within the offering utility's own assigned service area or, in the case of an affiliate, the service area assigned to an affiliated offering utility. The costs an offering public utility incurs in marketing, installing, owning, or maintaining leases through its own leasing programs as a lessor shall not be recovered from other nonparticipating utility customers through rates, and the Commission shall not have any jurisdiction over the financial terms of such leases. An offering utility, and the customer generator lessees that lease facilities from it, may participate on an equal basis with other lessors and lessees and in any approved incentive program offered by the utility to its customers.

(b) An electric generator lessor that owns a solar energy facility within the assigned service area of an offering utility and that is located on a premises owned or leased by a customer generator lessee shall be permitted to lease such facility exclusively to a customer generator lessee under a lease, provided that the electric generator lessor complies with the terms, conditions, and restrictions set forth within this section and holds a valid certificate issued by the Commission pursuant to G.S. 62-126.7. An electric generator lessor shall not be considered a "public utility" under G.S. 62-3(23) if the solar energy facility is only made available to a customer generator lessee under a lease that conforms to the requirements of G.S. 62-126.6 for the customer generator lessee's use on its premises where the solar energy facility is located to serve the electric energy requirements of that particular premises, including to enable the customer generator lessee to obtain a credit for the electricity generated under an applicable net metering tariff or to engage in the sale of excess energy from the solar energy facility to an offering utility.

(c) Any lease of a solar energy facility not entered into pursuant to this section is prohibited and any electric generator lessor that enters into a lease outside of an offering utility's program implemented pursuant to this section or otherwise enters into a contract or agreement where payments are based upon the electric output of a solar energy facility shall be considered a "public utility" under G.S. 62-3(23) and be in violation of the franchised service rights of the offering utility or any other electric power supplier authorized to provide retail electric service in the State. This section does not authorize the sale of electricity from solar energy facilities directly to any customer of an offering utility or other electric power supplier by the owner of a solar energy facility. The electrical output from any solar energy facility leased pursuant to this program shall be the sole and exclusive property of the customer generator lessee.

(d) The total installed capacity of all solar energy facilities on an offering utility's system that are leased pursuant to this section shall not exceed one percent (1%) of the previous five-year average of the North Carolina retail contribution to the offering utility's coincident retail peak demand. The offering utility may refuse to interconnect customers that would result in this limitation being exceeded. Each offering utility shall establish a program for new installations of leased equipment to permit the reservation of capacity by customer generator lessees, whether participating in a public utility or nonutility lessor's leasing program, on its system, including provisions to prevent or discourage abuse of such programs. Such programs must provide that only prospective individual customer generator lessees may apply for, receive, and hold reservations to participate in the offering utility's leasing program. Each reservation shall be for a single customer premises only and may not be sold, exchanged, traded, or assigned except as part of the sale of the underlying premises.

(e) To comply with the terms of this section, each customer generator lessor's solar energy facility shall serve only one premises and shall not serve multiple customer generator lessees or multiple premises. The customer generator lessee must enroll in the applicable rate schedule made available by the interconnecting offering utility, subject to the participation limitations set forth in subsection (a) of this section. (2017-192, s. 6(a).)

§ 62-126.6. Electric customer generator leasing requirements; disclosures; records.

(a) A lease agreement offered by an electric generator lessor must meet the following requirements:

(1) Be signed and dated by the retail electric customer. Any agreement that contains blank spaces when signed by the retail electric customer is voidable at the option of the retail electric customer until the solar energy facility is installed.

(2) Be in at least 12-point type.

(3) Include a provision granting the retail electric customer the right to rescind the agreement for a period of not less than three business days after the agreement is signed by the retail electric customer.

(4) Provide a description of the solar energy facility, including the make and model of the solar energy facility's major components, and a guarantee concerning energy production output that the solar energy facility will provide over the expected life of the agreement.

(5) Separately set forth the following items, as applicable:

a. The total cost to the retail electric customer under the lease agreement for the solar energy facility over the life of the agreement.

b. Any interest, installation fees, document preparation fees, service fees, or other costs to be paid by the retail electric customer.

c. The total number of payments, including the interest, the payment frequency, the estimated amount of the payment expressed in dollars, and the payment due date over the leased term.

(6) Identify any State or federal tax incentives that are included in the calculation of lease payments.

(7) Disclose whether the warranty or maintenance obligations related to the solar energy facility may be sold or transferred to a third party.

(8) Include a disclosure, the receipt of which shall be separately acknowledged by the retail electric customer, if a transfer of the lease agreement is subject to any

restrictions pursuant to the agreement on the retail electric customer's ability to modify or transfer ownership of a solar energy facility, including whether any modification or transfer is subject to review or approval by a third party. If the modification or transfer of the solar energy facility is subject to review or approval by a third party, the agreement must identify the name, address, and telephone number of, and provide for updating any change in, the entity responsible for approving the modification or transfer.

(9) Include a disclosure, the receipt of which shall be separately acknowledged by the retail electric customer, if a modification or transfer of ownership of the real property to which the solar energy facility is or will be affixed is subject to any restrictions pursuant to the agreement on the retail electric customer's ability to modify or transfer ownership of the real property to which the solar energy facility is installed or affixed, including whether any modification or transfer is subject to review or approval by a third party. If the modification or transfer of the real property to which the solar energy facility is affixed or installed is subject to review or approval by a third party, the agreement must identify the name, address, and telephone number of, and provide for updating any change in, the entity responsible for approving the modification or transfer.

(10) Provide a full and accurate summary of the total costs under the agreement for maintaining and operating the solar energy facility over the life of the solar energy facility, including financing, maintenance, and construction costs related to the solar energy facility.

(11) If the agreement contains an estimate of the retail electric customer's future utility charges based on projected utility rates after the installation of a solar energy facility, provide an estimate of the retail electric customer's estimated utility charges during the same period as impacted by potential utility rate changes ranging from at least a five percent (5%) annual decrease to at least a five percent (5%) annual increase from current utility costs. The comparative estimates must be calculated based on the same utility rates.

(12) Include a disclosure, the receipt of which shall be separately acknowledged by the retail electric customer that states: "Utility rates and utility rate structures are subject to change. These changes cannot be accurately predicted and projected savings from your solar energy facility are therefore subject to change. Tax incentives are subject to change or termination by executive, legislative, or regulatory action."

(b) Before the maintenance or warranty obligations of a solar energy facility under an existing lease agreement are transferred, the person who is currently obligated to maintain or warrant the solar energy facility must disclose the name, address, and telephone number of the person who will be assuming the maintenance or warranty of the solar energy facility.

(c) If the electric generator lessor's marketing materials contain an estimate of the retail electric customer's future utility charges based on projected utility rates after the installation of a solar energy facility, the marketing materials must contain an estimate of the retail electric customer's estimated utility charges during the same period as impacted by potential utility rate changes ranging from at least a five percent (5%) annual decrease to at least a five percent (5%) annual increase from current utility costs. (2017-192, s. 6(a).)

§ 62-126.7. Commission authority over electric generator lessors.

(a) No person shall engage in the leasing of a solar energy facility without having applied for and obtained a certificate authorizing those operations from the Commission. The application for a certificate of authority to engage in business as an electric generator lessor shall be made in a form prescribed by the Commission and accompanied by the fee required pursuant to G.S. 62-300(a)(16).

(b) In acting upon the application for a certificate of authority to engage in business as an electric generator lessor, the Commission shall take into account the State's interest in encouraging the leasing of solar electric generation facilities and avoidance of cross-subsidization as declared by the policy objectives of this Article as provided in G.S. 62-126.2, as well as the policy of the State, as provided in G.S. 62-2(a). The Commission shall issue a certificate of authority to engage in business as an electric generator lessor if the Commission finds that the applicant is fit, willing, and able to conduct that business in accordance with the provisions of this Article. The certificate shall be effective from the date issued unless otherwise specified therein and shall remain in effect until terminated under the terms thereof, or until suspended or revoked as herein provided.

(c) As a condition for issuance and continuation of a certificate of authority for an electric generator lessor, the applicant shall certify to the Commission all of the following:

(1) The applicant will register with the Commission each solar energy facility that the applicant leases to a customer generator lessee.

(2) That each lease of a solar energy facility that the applicant offers or accepts will comply with the provisions of this Article.

(3) The applicant will consent to the auditing of its books and records by the Public Staff insofar as those records relate to transactions with an offering utility or a customer generator lessee that is located in the State.

(4) That the applicant will conduct its business in substantial compliance with all federal and State laws, regulations, and rules for the protection of the environment and conservation of natural resources, the provision of electric service, and the protection of consumers.

(d) Upon the request of an electric public utility, an electric membership corporation, the Public Staff, a customer generator lessee, or person having an interest in the electric generator lessor's conduct of its business, the Commission may review the certificate to determine whether the electric generator lessor is conducting business in compliance with this Article. After notice to the electric generator lessor, the Commission may suspend the certificate and enter upon a hearing to determine whether the certificate should be revoked. After the hearing, and for good cause shown, the Commission may, in its discretion, reinstate a suspended certificate, continue a suspension of a certificate, or revoke a certificate.

(e) It shall be a violation of law punishable by a civil penalty of not more than ten thousand dollars ($10,000) per occurrence for any person to either directly or indirectly do any of the following:

(1) Solicit business as a lessor of solar energy facilities without a valid certificate issued under this section or otherwise in violation of the terms of this Article.

(2) Engage in any unfair or deceptive practice in the leasing of solar energy facilities or otherwise violate the requirements of G.S. 62-126.6.

(3) Operate in violation of the terms of the certificate issued by this Article. (2017-192, s. 6(a).)

§ 62-126.8. Community solar energy facilities.

(a) Each offering utility shall file a plan with the Commission to offer a community solar energy facility program for participation by its retail customers. The community solar energy facility program shall be designed so that each community solar energy facility offsets the energy use of not less than five subscribers and no single subscriber has more than a forty percent (40%) interest. The offering utility shall make its community solar energy facility program available on a first-come, first-served basis until the total nameplate generating capacity of those facilities equals 20 megawatts (MW).

(b) A community solar energy facility shall have a nameplate capacity of no more than five megawatts (MW). Each subscription shall be sized to represent at least 200 watts (W) of the community solar energy facility's generating capacity and to supply no more than one hundred percent (100%) of the maximum annual peak demand of electricity of each subscriber at the subscriber's premises.

(c) A community solar energy facility must be located in the service territory of the offering utility filing the plan. Subscribers shall be located in the State of North Carolina and the same county or a county contiguous to where the facility is located. The electric public utility may file a request for Commission approval for an exemption from the location requirement of this subsection and the Commission may approve the request for a facility located up to 75 miles from the county of the subscribers, if the Commission deems the exemption to be in the public interest.

(d) The offering utility shall credit the subscribers to its community solar energy facility for all subscribed shares of energy generated by the facility at the avoided cost rate.

(e) The Commission may approve, disapprove, or modify a community solar energy facility program. The program shall meet all of the following requirements:

(1) Establish uniform standards and processes for the community solar energy facilities that allow the electric public utility to recover reasonable interconnection costs, administrative costs, fixed costs, and variable costs associated with each community solar energy facility, including purchase expenses if a power purchase agreement is elected as the method of energy procurement by the offering utility.
(2) Be consistent with the public interest.
(3) Identify the information that must be provided to potential subscribers to ensure fair disclosure of future costs and benefits of subscriptions.
(4) Include a program implementation schedule.
(5) Identify all proposed rules and charges.
(6) Describe how the program will be promoted.
(7) Hold harmless customers of the electric public utility who do not subscribe to a community solar energy facility.
(8) Allow subscribers to have the option to own the renewable energy certificates produced by the community solar energy facility. (2017-192, s. 6(a).)

§ 62-126.9. Scope of leasing program by municipalities.

(a) A municipality that sells electric power to retail customers in the State may elect, by action of its governing council or commission, to be deemed to be an electric generator lessor and may offer leases to solar energy facilities located within the municipality's service territory. The costs a municipality incurs in marketing, installing, owning, or maintaining leases through its own

leasing programs as a lessor shall not be recovered from other nonparticipating municipality retail customers through rates.

(b) Provided the municipality has elected to offer a leasing program, an electric generator lessor that owns a solar energy facility within a municipality's service territory and that is located on a premises owned or leased by a customer generator lessee shall be permitted to lease such facility exclusively to a customer generator lessee pursuant to a lease under terms and conditions approved by the municipality and holds a valid certificate issued by the Commission pursuant to G.S. 62-126.7. Notwithstanding this subsection, a municipality acting as an electric generator lessor shall not be required to comply with G.S. 62-126.7.

(c) An electric generator lessor, including a municipality acting as an electric generator lessor, shall not be considered a "public utility" under G.S. 62-3(23) if the solar energy facilities are only made available to a customer generator lessee under a lease that conforms to the requirements of G.S. 62-126.6 for the customer generator lessee's use of the customer generator lessee's premises where the solar energy facility is located to serve the electric energy requirements of that particular premises, including to enable the customer generator lessee to obtain a credit under an applicable net metering tariff or to engage in the sale of excess energy from the solar energy facility to the municipality; provided, however, that the provisions of G.S. 62-126.4 shall not apply to a municipality or other electric generator lessor that offers leases to solar energy facilities located within the municipality's service territory pursuant to this section. Any net metering tariffs adopted by such municipality shall be adopted by its governing council or commission in accordance with the rate-setting procedures set forth in Article 16 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes.

(d) Any lease of a solar energy facility in a municipal electric service area not entered into pursuant to this section is prohibited. This section does not authorize the sale of electricity from solar energy facilities directly to any customer of a municipality by the owner of a solar energy facility. The electrical output from any eligible renewable electric generation facility leased pursuant to this section shall be the sole and exclusive property of the customer generator lessee.

(e) Each eligible solar energy facility shall serve only one premises and shall not serve multiple customer generator lessees or multiple premises. The customer generator lessee must enroll in the applicable rate schedule made available by the municipality, subject to the participation limitations set forth in subsection (a) of this section. (2017-192, s. 6(a).)

§ 62-126.10. Rules.

The Commission shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this Article. (2017-192, s. 6(a).)

Article 7.

Rates of Public Utilities.

§ 62-130. Commission to make rates for public utilities.

(a) The Commission shall make, fix, establish or allow just and reasonable rates for all public utilities subject to its jurisdiction. A rate is made, fixed, established or allowed when it becomes effective pursuant to the provisions of this Chapter.

(b) Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 676, s. 15.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 2021-23, s. 14, effective May 17, 2021.

(d) The Commission shall from time to time as often as circumstances may require, change and revise or cause to be changed or revised any rates fixed by the Commission, or allowed to be charged by any public utility.

(e) In all cases where the Commission requires or orders a public utility to refund moneys to its customers which were advanced by or overcollected from its customers, the Commission shall require or order the utility to add to said refund an amount of interest at such rate as the Commission may determine to be just and reasonable; provided, however, that such rate of interest applicable to said refund shall not exceed ten percent (10%) per annum. (1899, c. 164, ss. 2, 7, 14; 1903, c. 683; Rev., ss. 1096, 1099, 1106; 1907, c. 469, s. 4; Ex. Sess. 1908, c. 144, s. 1; 1913, c. 127, s. 2; 1917, c. 194; C.S., ss. 1066, 1071, 3489; Ex. Sess. 1920, c. 51, s. 1; 1925, c. 37; 1929, cc. 82, 91; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1953, c. 170; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1981, c. 461, s. 1; 1985, c. 676, s. 15(1); 2021-23, s. 14.)

§ 62-131. Rates must be just and reasonable; service efficient.

(a) Every rate made, demanded or received by any public utility, or by any two or more public utilities jointly, shall be just and reasonable.

(b) Every public utility shall furnish adequate, efficient and reasonable service. (1933, c. 307, ss. 2, 3; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-132. Rates established under this Chapter deemed just and reasonable; remedy for collection of unjust or unreasonable rates.

The rates established under this Chapter by the Commission shall be deemed just and reasonable, and any rate charged by any public utility different from those so established shall be deemed unjust and unreasonable. Provided, however, that upon petition filed by any interested person, and a hearing thereon, if the Commission shall find the rates or charges collected to be other than the rates established by the Commission, and to be unjust, unreasonable, discriminatory or preferential, the Commission may enter an order awarding such petitioner and all other persons in the same class a sum equal to the difference between such unjust, unreasonable, discriminatory or preferential rates or charges and the rates or charges found by the Commission to be just and reasonable, nondiscriminatory and nonpreferential, to the extent that such rates or charges were collected within two years prior to the filing of such petition. (1913, c. 127, s. 3; C.S., s. 1067; 1929, cc. 241, 342; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-133. How rates fixed.

(a) In fixing the rates for any public utility subject to the provisions of this Chapter, other than bus companies, motor carriers and certain water and sewer utilities, the Commission shall fix such rates as shall be fair both to the public utilities and to the consumer.

(b) In fixing such rates, the Commission shall:

(1) Ascertain the reasonable original cost or the fair value under G.S. 62-133.1A of the public utility's property used and useful, or to be used and useful within a reasonable time after the test period, in providing the service rendered to the public within the State, less that portion of the cost that has been consumed by previous use recovered by depreciation expense. In addition, construction work in progress may be included in the cost of the public utility's property under any of the following circumstances:

a. To the extent the Commission considers inclusion in the public interest and necessary to the financial stability of the utility in question, reasonable and prudent expenditures for construction work in progress

may be included, subject to the provisions of subdivision (4a) of this subsection.

b. For baseload electric generating facilities, reasonable and prudent expenditures shall be included pursuant to subdivisions (2) or (3) of G.S. 62-110.1(f1), whichever applies, subject to the provisions of subdivision (4a) of this subsection.

c. For baseload electric generating facilities, if the Commission determines there is an overall cost-savings for customers over the life of the generating facility and a baseload electric generating facility has been subject to an annual ongoing review process pursuant to G.S. 62-110.1(f), the Commission shall, upon determining through the ongoing review process that the expenditures were reasonably and prudently incurred, allow an increase in base rates outside of the rate-making processes established under this section or G.S. 62-133.16 to reflect solely the financing costs on such reasonable and prudent expenditures, with the increase being effective 30 days after the Commission's order finding that the expenditures were reasonable and prudent and allocated on a demand basis among customer classes. Any recovery authorized pursuant to this sub-subdivision shall be limited to those financing costs accrued on actual, reasonable, and prudent construction costs, after taking into account any direct customer contributions actually received that offset such construction costs, up to the estimated construction cost estimate approved by the Commission or later amended by the Commission pursuant to G.S. 62-110.1(e). If applicable, any revenues actually received from customers participating in a Commission-approved customer program shall be used to reduce the construction costs of the baseload electric generating facility and thereby proportionately reduce the amount of financing costs recovered hereunder. In the event the Commission approves cancellation of a generating facility for which financing costs have been recovered pursuant to this sub-subdivision, then: (i) as of the date the Commission approves cancellation of the construction of the generating facility, the electric public utility shall cease recovery of such financing costs pursuant to this sub-subdivision; and (ii) all costs determined by the Commission pursuant to G.S. 62-110.1(f) to have been imprudently incurred shall be disallowed and shall not be recovered from customers. With respect to natural gas baseload electric generating facilities, the authorization to recover financing costs pursuant to this sub-subdivision shall sunset as of December 31, 2033, for all construction costs incurred after December 31, 2033, but continued recovery of financing costs on construction costs for natural gas baseload electric generating facilities incurred prior to December 31, 2033, shall be permitted subject to all conditions of this sub-subdivision.

(1a) Apply the rate of return established under subdivision (4) of this subsection to rights-of-way acquired through agreements with the Department of Transportation pursuant to G.S. 136-19.5(a) if acquisition is consistent with a

definite plan to provide service within five years of the date of the agreement and if such right-of-way acquisition will result in benefits to the ratepayers. If a right-of-way is not used within a reasonable time after the expiration of the five-year period, it may be removed from the rate base by the Commission when rates for the public utility are next established under this section.

(2) Estimate such public utility's revenue under the present and proposed rates.

(3) Ascertain such public utility's reasonable operating expenses, including actual investment currently consumed through reasonable actual depreciation.

(4) Fix such rate of return on the cost of the property ascertained pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection as will enable the public utility by sound management to produce a fair return for its shareholders, considering changing economic conditions and other factors, including, but not limited to, the inclusion of construction work in progress in the utility's property under sub-subdivision b. of subdivision (1) of this subsection, as they then exist, to maintain its facilities and services in accordance with the reasonable requirements of its customers in the territory covered by its franchise, and to compete in the market for capital funds on terms that are reasonable and that are fair to its customers and to its existing investors.

(4a) Require each public utility to discontinue capitalization of the composite carrying cost of capital funds used to finance construction (allowance for funds) on the construction work in progress included in its rate based upon the effective date of the first and each subsequent general rate order issued with respect to it after the effective date of this subsection; allowance for funds may be capitalized with respect to expenditures for construction work in progress not included in the utility's property upon which the rates were fixed. In determining net operating income for return, the Commission shall not include any capitalized allowance for funds used during construction on the construction work in progress included in the utility's rate base.

(5) Fix such rates to be charged by the public utility as will earn in addition to reasonable operating expenses ascertained pursuant to subdivision (3) of this subsection the rate of return fixed pursuant to subdivisions (4) and (4a) on the cost of the public utility's property ascertained pursuant to subdivisions (1) and (1a) of this subsection.

(c) The original cost of the public utility's property, including its construction work in progress, shall be determined as of the end of the test period used in the hearing and the probable future revenues and expenses shall be based on the plant and equipment in operation at that time. If the public utility elects to establish rate base using fair value, the fair value determination of the public utility's property shall be made as provided in G.S. 62-133.1A, and the probable future revenues and expenses shall be based on the plant and equipment in operation at the end of the test period. The test period shall consist of 12 months' historical operating experience prior to the date the rates are proposed to become effective, but the Commission shall consider such relevant, material and competent evidence as may be offered by any party to the proceeding tending to show actual changes in costs, revenues or the cost of the public utility's property used and useful, or to be used and useful within a reasonable time after the test period, in providing the service rendered to the public within this State, including its construction work in progress, which is based upon circumstances and events occurring up to the time the hearing is closed, provided that the public

utility has provided notice of the potential for such change at least 60 days prior to the start of the hearing. In setting the electric public utility's authorized rate of return on equity, the Commission shall consider any increased or decreased risk to either the electric public utility or its ratepayers that may result from recovery of financing costs pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this section.

(d) The Commission shall consider all other material facts of record that will enable it to determine what are reasonable and just rates.

(e) The fixing of a rate of return shall not bar the fixing of a different rate of return in a subsequent proceeding.

(f) Repealed by Session Laws 1991, c. 598, s. 7.

(g) Reserved.

(h) Repealed by Session Laws 1998-128, s. 4, effective September 4, 1998. (1899, c. 164, s. 2, subsec. 1; Rev., s. 1104; C.S., s. 1068; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1971, c. 1092; 1973, c. 956, s. 1; c. 1041, s. 1; 1975, c. 184, s. 2; 1977, c. 691, ss. 2, 3; 1981, c. 476; 1981 (Reg. Sess., 1982), c. 1197, s. 6; 1985, c. 676, s. 15(2); 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 962, s. 4; 1991, c. 598, s. 7; 1998-128, s. 4; 2007-397, s. 8; 2018-51, s. 1; 2025-78, s. 2(b).)

§ 62-133.1. Small water and sewer utility rates.

(a) In fixing the rates for any water or sewer utility, the Commission may fix such rates on the ratio of the operating expenses to the operating revenues, such ratio to be determined by the Commission, unless the utility requests that such rates be fixed under G.S. 62-133(b) or G.S. 62-133.1B. Nothing in this subsection shall be held to extinguish any remedy or right not inconsistent herewith. This subsection shall be in addition to other provisions of this Chapter which relate to public utilities generally, except that in cases of conflict between such other provisions, this section shall prevail for water and sewer utilities.

(b) A water or sewer utility may enter into uniform contracts with nonusers of its utility service within a specific subdivision or development for the payment by such nonusers to the utility of a fee or charge for placing or maintaining lines or other facilities or otherwise making and keeping such utility's service available to such nonusers; or such a utility may, by contract of assignment, receive the benefits and assume the obligations of uniform contracts entered into between the developers of subdivisions and the purchasers of lots in such subdivisions whereby such developer has contracted to make utility service available to lots in such subdivision and purchasers of such lots have contracted to pay a fee or charge for the availability of such utility service; provided, however, that the maximum nonuser rate shall be as established by contract, except that the contractual charge to nonusers of the utility service can never exceed the lawfully established minimum rate to user customers of the utility service. (1973, c. 956, s. 2; 2021-149, s. 1(b).)

§ 62-133.1A. Fair value determination of government-owned water and wastewater systems.

(a) Election. – A water or wastewater public utility, as defined by G.S. 62-3(23)a.2., may elect to establish rate base by using the fair value of the utility property instead of original cost when acquiring an existing water or wastewater system owned by a municipality or county or an authority or district established under Chapter 162A of the General Statutes.

(b) Determination of Fair Value. –

(1) The fair value of a system to be acquired shall be based on three separate appraisals conducted by accredited, impartial valuation experts chosen from a

list to be established by the Commission. The following shall apply to the valuation:

a. One appraiser shall represent the public utility acquiring the system, another appraiser shall represent the utility selling the system, and another appraiser shall represent the Public Staff of the Commission.
b. Each appraiser shall determine fair value in compliance with the uniform standards of professional appraisal practice, employing cost, market, and income approaches to assessment of value.
c. Fair value, for ratemaking purposes under G.S. 62-133, shall be the average of the three appraisals provided for by this subsection.
d. The original source of funding for all or any portions of the water and sewer assets being acquired is not relevant to an evaluation of fair value.

(2) The acquiring public utility and selling utility shall jointly retain a licensed engineer to conduct an assessment of the tangible assets of the system to be acquired, and the assessment shall be used by the three appraisers in determining fair value.

(3) Reasonable fees, as determined by the Commission, paid to utility valuation experts, may be included in the cost of the acquired system, in addition to reasonable transaction and closing costs incurred by the acquiring public utility.

(4) The rate base value of the acquired system, which shall be reflected in the acquiring public utility's next general rate case for ratemaking purposes, shall be the lesser of the purchase price negotiated between the parties to the sale or the fair value plus the fees and costs authorized in subdivision (3) of this subsection.

(5) The normal rules of depreciation shall begin to apply against the rate base value upon purchase of the system by the acquiring public utility.

(c) An application to the Commission for a determination of the rate base value of the system to be acquired shall contain all of the following:

(1) Copies of the valuations performed by the appraisers, as provided in subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this section.

(2) Any deficiencies identified by the engineering assessment conducted pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section and a five-year plan for prudent and necessary infrastructure improvements by the acquiring entity.

(3) Projected rate impact for the selling entity's customers for the next five years.

(4) The averaging of the appraisers' valuations, which shall constitute fair value for purposes of this section.

(5) The assessment of tangible assets performed by a licensed professional engineer, as provided in subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section.

(6) The contract of sale.

(7) The estimated valuation fees and transaction and closing costs incurred by the acquiring public utility.

(8) A tariff, including rates equal to the rates of the selling utility. The selling utility's rates shall be the rates charged to the customers of the acquiring public utility until the acquiring public utility's next general rate case, unless otherwise ordered by the Commission for good cause shown.

(d) Final Order. – If the application meets all the requirements of subsection (c) of this section, the Commission shall issue its final order approving or denying the application within six months of the date on which the application was filed. An order approving an application shall determine the rate base value of the acquired property for ratemaking purposes in a manner consistent with the provisions of this section.

(e) Commission's Authority. – The Commission shall retain its authority under Chapter 62 of the General Statutes to set rates for the acquired system in future rate cases, and shall have the discretion to classify the acquired system as a separate entity for ratemaking purposes, consistent with the public interest. If the Commission finds that the average of the appraisals will not result in a reasonable fair value, the Commission may adjust the fair value as it deems appropriate and in the public interest.

(f) The Commission shall adopt rules to implement this section. (2018-51, s. 2; 2021-23, s. 25.)

§ 62-133.1B. Water and Sewer Investment Plan ratemaking mechanism authorized.

(a) Notwithstanding the methods for fixing water and sewer rates under G.S. 62-133 or G.S. 62-133.1, upon application by a water or sewer utility in a general rate proceeding, the Commission may approve a Water and Sewer Investment Plan. A Water and Sewer Investment Plan, as filed by a water or sewer utility, shall include performance-based metrics that benefit customers and ensure the provision of safe, reliable, and cost-effective service by the water or sewer utility. For purposes of this section, "Water and Sewer Investment Plan" means a plan under which the Commission sets water or sewer base rates, revenue requirements through banding of authorized returns as provided in this section, and authorizes annual rate changes for a three-year period based on reasonably known and measurable capital investments and anticipated reasonable and prudent expenses approved under the plan without the need for a base rate proceeding during the plan period.

(b) The Commission may approve a Water and Sewer Investment Plan proposed by a water or sewer utility only upon a finding by the Commission that the plan results in rates that are just and reasonable and are in the public interest. In reviewing any application under this section, the Commission shall consider whether the water or sewer utility's application, as proposed, (i) establishes rates that are fair both to the customer and to the water or sewer utility, (ii) reasonably ensures the continuation of safe and reliable utility services, (iii) will not result in sudden substantial rate increases to customers annually or over the term of the plan, (iv) is representative of the utility's operations over the plan term, and (v) is otherwise in the public interest. In approving an application submitted under this section, the Commission may impose any conditions in the implementation of a Water and Sewer Investment Plan that the Commission considers necessary to ensure that the utility complies with the plan, and that the plan and associated rates are just, reasonable, and in the public interest, and the plan reasonably ensures the provision of safe, reliable, and cost-effective service to customers.

(c) Any rate adjustment allowed under a Water and Sewer Investment Plan approved pursuant to this section shall not, on an annual basis for years two and three of the plan, exceed five percent (5%) of the utility's North Carolina retail jurisdictional gross revenues for the preceding plan year. Upon a petition to the Commission, the Commission may consider the addition of unplanned emergency capital investments that must be undertaken during a plan term to address risk of noncompliance with primary drinking water or effluent standards, or to mitigate cyber or

physical security risks, even if such expenditures would cause the above-referenced cap to be exceeded.

(d) Any rate adjustment mechanism authorized pursuant to G.S. 62-133.12 or G.S. 62-133.12A shall be discontinued during the term of any Water and Sewer Investment Plan. The utility may file for a rate adjustment mechanism authorized pursuant to G.S. 62-133.12, which shall not become effective before the end of the Water and Sewer Investment Plan. No capital improvements recovered through a Water and Sewer Investment Plan may be included for recovery in a rate adjustment mechanism authorized pursuant to G.S. 62-133.12.

(e) The Commission shall, after notice and an opportunity for interested parties to be heard, issue an order ruling on the water or sewer utility's request to adjust base rates under G.S. 62-133, denying or approving, with or without modifications, a water or sewer utility's proposed Water and Sewer Investment Plan. An approved plan shall be effective no later than the end of the maximum suspension period pursuant to G.S. 62-134(b).

(f) At any time, for good cause shown and after an opportunity for hearing, the Commission may modify or terminate an approved Water and Sewer Investment Plan if modification or termination is determined to be in the public interest.

(g) The Commission shall establish banding of authorized returns on equity for Water and Sewer Investment Plans approved pursuant to this section. For purposes of this section, "banding of authorized returns" means a rate mechanism under which the Commission sets an authorized return on equity for a water or sewer utility that acts as a midpoint and then applies a low- and high-end range of returns to that midpoint under which a water or sewer utility will not overearn if within the high-end range and will not underearn if within the low-end range. Any banding of the water or sewer utility's authorized return shall not exceed 100 basis points above or below the midpoint. [The following applies:]

(1) If a water or sewer utility exceeds the high-end range of the band that is approved by the Commission, the water or sewer utility shall refund or credit earnings above that high-end range to customers in a manner to be prescribed by rules adopted by the Commission pursuant to subsection (i) of this section.

(2) If a water or sewer utility falls below the low-end range of the band that is approved by the Commission, the utility may file a general rate case.

(h) The Commission shall annually review a water or sewer utility's earnings to ensure the utility is not earning in excess of its allowable return on equity for reasonable and prudent costs to provide service. For purposes of measuring a water or sewer utility's earnings under any mechanisms, plans, or settlements approved under this section, the utility shall make an annual filing that sets forth the utility's earned return on equity for the prior 12-month period.

(i) The Commission shall adopt rules to implement the requirements of this section, including rules to:

(1) Establish procedures for filing a Water and Sewer Investment Plan under this section.

(2) Require reporting on an annual basis of performance-based metrics and evaluation of those metrics' results to ensure the utility continues to perform in a safe, reliable, and cost-effective manner.

(3) Develop banding of authorized returns. In setting a midpoint authorized rate of return on equity for banding of authorized returns pursuant to this section, the Commission may consider any decreased or increased risk to a water or sewer

utility that may result from having an approved Water and Sewer Investment Plan.

(4) Establish a procedure for the water or sewer utility to annually refund or credit to customers excess earnings above the high end of the authorized band of returns.

(5) Establish a methodology to annually review the costs subject to the adjustment mechanism, including the opportunity for public hearings.

(j) On or before July 1, 2026, the Commission shall report to the Joint Legislative Commission on Energy Policy on the impacts of each Water and Sewer Investment Plan approved by the Commission pursuant to this section for a water or sewer utility. At a minimum, the report shall include a Plan's impact on rates for customers of the applicable utility, the number of customers disconnected for nonpayment in the four years prior to Commission approval of a Plan for the applicable utility, the number of utility customers disconnected for nonpayment after approval and implementation of the Plan to the date the report is submitted, and the amount of utility earnings under an approved plan. In consultation with the Department of Environmental Quality, the Commission shall also report on any impacts to drinking water quality of utility customers or to surface or groundwater resources from Plans implemented by water and sewer utilities. The report may include any other information the Commission deems relevant, and shall include any Commission recommendations for legislative action. (2021-23, s. 25; 2021-149, s. 1(a).)

§ 62-133.2. Fuel and fuel-related charge adjustments for electric utilities.

(a) The Commission shall permit an electric public utility that generates electric power by fossil fuel or nuclear fuel to charge an increment or decrement as a rider to its rates for changes in the cost of fuel and fuel-related costs used in providing its North Carolina customers with electricity from the cost of fuel and fuel-related costs established in the electric public utility's previous general rate case on the basis of cost per kilowatt hour.

(a1) As used in this section, "cost of fuel and fuel-related costs" means all of the following:

(1) The cost of fuel burned.

(2) The cost of fuel transportation.

(3) The cost of ammonia, lime, limestone, urea, dibasic acid, sorbents, and catalysts consumed in reducing or treating emissions, including emissions allowances.

(4) The total delivered costs, including capacity and noncapacity related costs, fuel costs, and all related transmission charges, of all purchases of electric power and capacity by the electric public utility, except for those costs recovered pursuant to G.S. 62-133.8(h).

(5) Repealed by Session Laws 2025-78, s. 3, effective July 29, 2025.

(6) Repealed by Session Laws 2025-78, s. 3, effective July 29, 2025.

(6a) Any other costs required to comply with any federal mandate that is similar to the requirements of subsections (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of G.S. 62-133.8.

(7) Repealed by Session Laws 2025-78, s. 3, effective July 29, 2025.

(8) Cost of fuel and fuel-related costs shall be adjusted for any net gains or losses resulting from any sales by the electric public utility of fuel and other fuel-related costs components.

(9) Cost of fuel and fuel-related costs shall be adjusted for any net gains or losses resulting from any sales by the electric public utility of by-products produced in

the generation process to the extent the costs of the inputs leading to that by-product are costs of fuel or fuel-related costs.

(10) Repealed by Session Laws 2025-78, s. 3, effective July 29, 2025.

(11) All nonadministrative costs related to the renewable energy procurement pursuant to G.S. 62-159.2 not recovered from the program participants.

(a2) For those costs that involve power purchase agreements from renewable generating facilities (including qualifying cogeneration facilities and qualifying small power production facilities, as defined in 16 U.S.C. § 796, costs related to G.S. 62-133.8(h) or any other costs required to comply with any federal mandate that is similar to the requirements of subsections (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of G.S. 62-133.8), and nonadministrative costs related to the renewable energy procurement pursuant to G.S. 62-159.2 not recovered from the program participants, the annual increase in the aggregate amount of these costs that are recoverable by an electric public utility pursuant to this section shall not exceed two and one-half percent (2.5%) of the electric public utility's total North Carolina retail jurisdictional gross revenues for the preceding calendar year. The costs described in subdivision (4) of subsection (a1) of this section shall be recoverable from each class of customers allocated on a demand basis among customer classes.

(a3) Notwithstanding subsections (a1) and (a2) of this section, for an electric public utility that has fewer than 150,000 North Carolina retail jurisdictional customers as of December 31, 2006, the costs identified in subdivisions (1), (2), (4), and (6a) of subsection (a1) of this section shall be recovered through the increment or decrement rider approved by the Commission pursuant to this section. For those costs that involve power purchase agreements from renewable generating facilities (including qualifying cogeneration facilities and qualifying small power production facilities, as defined in 16 U.S.C. § 796, costs related to G.S. 62-133.8(h) or any other costs required to comply with any federal mandate that is similar to the requirements of subsections (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of G.S. 62-133.8), the annual increase in the amount of these costs shall not exceed one percent (1%) of the electric public utility's total North Carolina retail jurisdictional gross revenues for the preceding calendar year. For the costs described in subdivision (4) of subsection (a1) of this section, the specific component for each class of customers shall be determined by allocating these costs among customer classes based on the electric public utility's North Carolina peak demand for the prior year, as determined by the Commission, until the Commission determines how these costs shall be allocated in a general rate case for the electric public utility commenced on or after January 1, 2008.

(a4) The electric public utility shall make appropriate adjustments to its fuel and fuel-related costs to reflect costs already being recovered in base rates so as to avoid double recovery of any fuel and fuel-related costs and the Commission shall approve any accounting adjustments necessary in a future fuel proceeding or general rate case to avoid such double recovery.

(b) The Commission shall conduct a hearing within 12 months of each electric public utility's last general rate case order to determine whether an increment or decrement rider is required to reflect actual changes in the cost of fuel and fuel-related costs over or under the cost of fuel and fuel-related costs on a kilowatt-hour basis in base rates established in the electric public utility's last preceding general rate case. Additional hearings shall be held on an annual basis but only one hearing for each electric public utility may be held within 12 months of the last general rate case.

(c) For purposes of the annual hearing, each electric public utility shall submit to the Commission verified annualized information and data in such form and detail as the Commission may require, for an historic 12-month test period, relating to:

(1) Cost of fuel and fuel-related costs used in each generating facility owned in whole or in part by the utility.
(2) Fuel procurement practices and fuel inventories for each facility.
(3) Burned cost of fuel used in each generating facility.
(4) Plant capacity factor for each generating facility.
(5) Plant availability factor for each generating plant.
(6) Generation mix by types of fuel used.
(7) Sources and fuel cost component of purchased power used.
(8) Recipients of and revenues received for power sales and times of power sales.
(9) Test period kilowatt-hour sales for the utility's total system and on the total system separated for North Carolina jurisdictional sales.
(10) Procurement practices and inventories for: fuel burned and for ammonia, lime, limestone, urea, dibasic acid, sorbents, and catalysts consumed in reducing or treating emissions.
(11) The cost incurred at each generating facility of fuel burned and of ammonia, lime, limestone, urea, dibasic acid, sorbents, and catalysts consumed in reducing or treating emissions.
(12) Any net gains or losses resulting from any sales by the electric public utility of fuel or other fuel-related costs components.
(13) Any net gains or losses resulting from any sales by the electric public utility of by-products produced in the generation process to the extent the costs of the inputs leading to that by-product are costs of fuel or fuel-related costs.

(d) The Commission shall provide for notice of a public hearing with reasonable and adequate time for investigation and for all intervenors to prepare for hearing. At the hearing the Commission shall receive evidence from the utility, the Public Staff, and any intervenor desiring to submit evidence, and from the public generally. In reaching its decision, the Commission shall consider all evidence required under subsection (c) of this section as well as any and all other competent evidence that may assist the Commission in reaching its decision including changes in the cost of fuel consumed and fuel-related costs that occur within a reasonable time, as determined by the Commission, after the test period is closed. The Commission shall incorporate in its cost of fuel and fuel-related costs determination under this subsection the experienced over-recovery or under-recovery of reasonable costs of fuel and fuel-related costs prudently incurred by the electric public utility, based upon the prudent standards set pursuant to subsection (d1) of this section, in fixing an increment or decrement rider. Upon request of the electric public utility, the Commission shall also incorporate in this determination the experienced over-recovery or under-recovery of costs of fuel and fuel-related costs through the date that is 30 calendar days prior to the date of the hearing, provided that the reasonableness and prudence of these costs shall be subject to review in the utility's next annual hearing pursuant to this section. The Commission shall use deferral accounting, and consecutive test periods, in complying with this subsection, and the over-recovery or under-recovery portion of the increment or decrement shall be reflected in rates for 12 months, notwithstanding any changes in the base fuel cost in a general rate case. Any experienced over-recovery or under-recovery of reasonable fuel and fuel-related costs prudently incurred shall accrue interest at the commercial paper rate as identified by the Federal Reserve for A2/P2 nonfinancial issuers, or reasonable successor thereto, on a weighted average basis over the applicable time period. The burden of proof as to the correctness and reasonableness of the charge and as to whether the cost of fuel and fuel-related costs were reasonably and prudently incurred

shall be on the utility. The Commission shall allow only that portion, if any, of a requested cost of fuel and fuel-related costs adjustment that is based on adjusted and reasonable cost of fuel and fuel-related costs prudently incurred under efficient management and economic operations. In evaluating whether cost of fuel and fuel-related costs were reasonable and prudently incurred, the Commission shall apply the rule adopted pursuant to subsection (d1) of this section. To the extent that the Commission determines that an increment or decrement to the rates of the utility due to changes in the cost of fuel and fuel-related costs over or under base fuel costs established in the preceding general rate case is just and reasonable, the Commission shall order that the increment or decrement become effective for all sales of electricity and remain in effect until changed in a subsequent general rate case or annual proceeding under this section.

(d1) Within one year after ratification of this act, for the purposes of setting cost of fuel and fuel-related costs rates, the Commission shall adopt a rule that establishes prudent standards and procedures with which it can appropriately measure management efficiency in minimizing cost of fuel and fuel-related costs.

(d2) Within 45 days of the end of every quarter of the applicable 12 month recovery-period approved by the Commission, each electric public utility shall file a report detailing its actual over- and under-recovered amounts through such quarter and an updated projection of the cumulative over- or under-recovered amounts at the end of such 12 month recovery-period based on the most recently available fuel forecast. If the updated projection of the cumulative over- or under-recovered amounts at the end of such 12 month recovery-period, inclusive of the actual amounts, is greater than ten percent (10%) of the total revenue requirement approved by the Commission in the most recent fuel proceeding, then the electric public utility shall identify the adjustment needed to the increment or decrement rider to address such over- or under-recovery over the twelve month period following the effective date of such adjustment, or such other time period that the Commission deems reasonable, and file an updated tariff to reflect such adjustment as part of such quarterly report. [The following provisions apply:]

(1) The identified adjustment to the increment or decrement rider shall go into effect at the start of the month that is approximately 45 days after the quarterly update filing made under this subsection and such adjustment shall remain in effect for the twelve month period following the effective date of such adjustment, or such other time period that the Commission deems reasonable.

(2) All of the costs of fuel and fuel-related costs, including those which are recovered through the quarterly adjustment authorized under this subsection will be reviewed for reasonableness and prudence of such costs in the next annual proceeding held by the Commission to review an electric public utility's annual fuel and fuel-related adjustment pursuant to subsections (b) and (c) of this section.

(3) In the event that the electric public utility's projections result in either solely downward rate adjustments for 12 consecutive quarterly periods or solely upward rate adjustments for 12 consecutive quarterly periods, the electric public utility shall report to the Commission in the next annual fuel filing regarding the reasons for such outcome and its plans to improve the accuracy of its projection methodology.

(e) If the Commission has not issued an order pursuant to this section within 180 days of a utility's submission of annual data under subsection (c) of this section, the utility may place the requested cost of fuel and fuel-related costs adjustment into effect. If the change in rate is finally

determined to be excessive, the utility shall make refund of any excess plus interest to its customers in a manner ordered by the Commission.

(f) Nothing in this section shall relieve the Commission from its duty to consider the reasonableness of the cost of fuel and fuel-related costs in a general rate case and to set rates reflecting reasonable cost of fuel and fuel-related costs pursuant to G.S. 62-133. Nothing in this section shall invalidate or preempt any condition adopted by the Commission and accepted by the utility in any proceeding that would limit the recovery of costs by any electric public utility under this section.

(g) Repealed by Session Laws 2014-120, s. 10(d), effective September 18, 2014. (1981 (Reg. Sess., 1982), c. 1197, s. 1; 1987, c. 677, ss. 1, 5; 1989, c. 15, s. 1; 1991, c. 129, s. 1; 1995, c. 15, ss. 1, 2; 2007-397, s. 5; 2011-291, s. 2.11; 2014-120, s. 10(d); 2017-192, s. 4(a); 2018-114, s. 22; 2025-78, s. 3.)

§ 62-133.3: Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 27, s. 5.

§ 62-133.4. Gas cost adjustment for natural gas local distribution companies.

(a) Rate changes for natural gas local distribution companies occasioned by changes in the cost of natural gas supply and transportation may be determined under this section rather than under G.S. 62-133(b), (c), or (d).

(b) From time to time, as changes in the cost of natural gas require, each natural gas local distribution company may apply to the Commission for permission to change its rates to track changes in the cost of natural gas supply and transportation. The Commission may, without a hearing, issue an order allowing such rate changes to become effective simultaneously with the effective date of the change in the cost of natural gas or at any other time ordered by the Commission. If the Commission has not issued an order under this subsection within 120 days after the application, the utility may place the requested rate adjustment into effect. If the rate adjustment is finally determined to be excessive or is denied, the utility shall make refund of any excess, plus interest as provided in G.S. 62-130(e), to its customers in a manner ordered by the Commission. Any rate adjustment under this subsection is subject to review under subsection (c) of this section.

(c) Each natural gas local distribution company shall submit to the Commission information and data for an historical 12-month test period concerning the utility's actual cost of gas, volumes of purchased gas, sales volumes, negotiated sales volumes, and transportation volumes. This information and data shall be filed on an annual basis in the form and detail and at the time required by the Commission. The Commission, upon notice and hearing, shall compare the utility's prudently incurred costs with costs recovered from all the utility's customers that it served during the test period. If those prudently incurred costs are greater or less than the recovered costs, the Commission shall, subject to G.S. 62-158, require the utility to refund any overrecovery by credit to bill or through a decrement in its rates and shall permit the utility to recover any deficiency through an increment in its rates. If the Commission finds the overrecovery or deficiency has been or is likely to be substantially reduced, negated, or reversed before or during the period in which it would be credited or recovered, the Commission, in its discretion, may order the utility to make an appropriate adjustment or no adjustment to its rates, consistent with the public interest.

(d) Nothing in this section prohibits the Commission from investigating and changing unreasonable rates as authorized by this Chapter, nor does it prohibit the Commission from disallowing the recovery of any gas costs not prudently incurred by a utility.

(d1) The utility shall not recover from ratepayers, in any rate recovery proceeding or rider, the incremental cost of natural gas attributable to renewable energy biomass resources that exceeds the average system cost of gas unattributable to renewable energy biomass resources calculated and filed with the Commission pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. Each natural gas local distribution company that incurs costs attributable to renewable energy biomass resources shall submit the utility's actual cost thereof to the Commission monthly for purposes of determining the total amount of natural gas costs recoverable under this section.

(e) The following definitions apply in this section:

(1) "Cost" or "costs" shall be defined by Commission rule or order and may include all costs related to the production, purchase, and transportation of natural gas to the natural gas local distribution company's system.

(2) "Domestic wastewater" means water-carried human wastes together with all other water-carried wastes normally present in wastewater from non-industrial processes.

(3) "Natural gas" or "gas" includes gas derived from renewable energy biomass resources.

(4) "Renewable energy biomass resources" includes agricultural waste, animal waste, wood waste, spent pulping liquors, organic waste, combustible residues, combustible gases, energy crops, landfill methane, or domestic wastewater. (1991, c. 598, s. 8; 2021-23, s. 15; 2024-45, s. 13(a).)

§ 62-133.5. Alternative regulation, tariffing, and deregulation of telecommunications utilities.

(a) Any local exchange company, subject to the provisions of G.S. 62-110(f1), that is subject to rate of return regulation pursuant to G.S. 62-133 or a form of alternative regulation authorized by subsection (b) of this section may elect to have the rates, terms, and conditions of its services determined pursuant to a form of price regulation, rather than rate of return or other form of earnings regulation. Under this form of price regulation, the Commission shall, among other things, permit the local exchange company to determine and set its own depreciation rates, to rebalance its rates, and to adjust its prices in the aggregate, or to adjust its prices for various aggregated categories of services, based upon changes in generally accepted indices of prices. Upon application, the Commission shall, after notice and an opportunity for interested parties to be heard, approve such price regulation, which may differ between local exchange companies, upon finding that the plan as proposed (i) protects the affordability of basic local exchange service, as such service is defined by the Commission; (ii) reasonably assures the continuation of basic local exchange service that meets reasonable service standards that the Commission may adopt; (iii) will not unreasonably prejudice any class of telephone customers, including telecommunications companies; and (iv) is otherwise consistent with the public interest. Upon approval, and except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, price regulation shall thereafter be the sole form of regulation imposed upon the electing local exchange company, and the Commission shall thenceforth regulate the electing local exchange company's prices, rather than its earnings. The Commission shall issue an order denying or approving the proposed plan for price regulation, with or without modification, not more than 90 days from the filing of the application. However, the

Commission may extend the time period for an additional 90 days at the discretion of the Commission. If the Commission approves the application with modifications, the local exchange company subject to such approval may accept the modifications and implement the proposed plan as modified, or may, at its option, (i) withdraw its application and continue to be regulated under the form of regulation that existed immediately prior to the filing of the application; (ii) file another proposed plan for price regulation; or (iii) file an application for a form of alternative regulation under subsection (b) of this section. If the initial price regulation plan is approved with modifications and the local exchange company files another plan pursuant to part (ii) of the previous sentence, the Commission shall issue an order denying or approving the proposed plan for price regulation, with or without modifications, not more than 90 days from that filing by the local exchange company.

(b) Any local exchange company that is subject to rate of return regulation pursuant to G.S. 62-133 and which elects not to file for price regulation under the provisions of subsection (a) above may file an application with the Commission for forms of alternative regulation, which may differ between companies and may include, but are not limited to, ranges of authorized returns, categories of services, and price indexing. Upon application, the Commission shall approve such alternative regulatory plan upon finding that the plan as proposed (i) protects the affordability of basic local exchange service, as such service is defined by the Commission; (ii) reasonably assures the continuation of basic local exchange service that meets reasonable service standards established by the Commission; (iii) will not unreasonably prejudice any class of telephone customers, including telecommunications companies; and (iv) is otherwise consistent with the public interest. The Commission shall issue an order denying or approving the proposed plan with or without modification, not more than 90 days from the filing of the application. However, the Commission may extend the time period for an additional 90 days at the discretion of the Commission. If the Commission approves the application with modifications, the local exchange company subject to such approval may, at its option, accept the modifications and implement the proposed plan as modified or may, at its option, (i) withdraw its application and continue to be regulated under the form of regulation that existed at the time of filing the application; or (ii) file an application for another form of alternative regulation. If the initial plan is approved with modifications and the local exchange company files another plan pursuant to part (ii) of the previous sentence, the Commission shall issue an order denying or approving the proposed plan, with or without modifications, not more than 90 days from that filing by the local exchange company.

(c) Any local exchange company subject to price regulation under the provisions of subsection (a) of this section may file an application with the Commission to modify such form of price regulation or for other forms of regulation. Any local exchange company subject to a form of alternative regulation under subsection (b) of this section may file an application with the Commission to modify such form of alternative regulation. Upon application, the Commission shall approve such other form of regulation upon finding that the plan as proposed (i) protects the affordability of basic local exchange service, as such service is defined by the Commission; (ii) reasonably assures the continuation of basic local exchange service that meets reasonable service standards established by the Commission; (iii) will not unreasonably prejudice any class of telephone customers, including telecommunications companies; and (iv) is otherwise consistent with the public interest. If the Commission disapproves, in whole or in part, a local exchange company's application to modify its existing form of price regulation, the company may elect to

continue to operate under its then existing plan previously approved under this subsection or subsection (a) of this section.

(c1) In determining whether a price regulation plan is otherwise consistent with the public interest, the Commission shall not consider the local exchange company's past or present earnings or rates of return.

(d) Any local exchange company subject to price regulation under the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, or other alternative regulation under subsection (b) of this section, or other form of regulation under subsection (c) of this section shall file tariffs for basic local exchange service and toll switched access services stating the terms and conditions of the services and the applicable rates. However, fees charged by such local exchange companies applicable to charges for returned checks shall not be tariffed or otherwise regulated by the Commission. The filing of any tariff changing the terms and conditions of such services or increasing the rates for such services shall be presumed valid and shall become effective, unless otherwise suspended by the Commission for a term not to exceed 45 days, 14 days after filing. Any tariff reducing rates for basic local exchange service or toll switched access service shall be presumed valid and shall become effective, unless otherwise suspended by the Commission for a term not to exceed 45 days, seven days after filing. Any local exchange company subject to price regulation under the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, or other alternative regulation under subsection (b) of this section, or other form of regulation under subsection (c) of this section may file tariffs for services other than basic local exchange services and toll switched access services. Any tariff changing the terms and conditions of such services or increasing the rates for an existing service or establishing the terms, conditions, or rates for a new service shall be presumed valid and shall become effective, unless otherwise suspended by the Commission for a term not to exceed 45 days, 14 days after filing. Any tariff reducing the rates for such services shall be presumed valid and shall become effective, unless otherwise suspended by the Commission for a term not to exceed 45 days, seven days after filing. In the event of a complaint with regard to a tariff filing under this subsection, the Commission may take such steps as it deems appropriate to assure that such tariff filing is consistent with the plan previously adopted pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, subsection (b) of this section, or subsection (c) of this section.

(e) Any allegation of anticompetitive activity by a competing local provider or a local exchange company shall be raised in a complaint proceeding pursuant to G.S. 62-73.

(f) Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 62-140, or any Commission rule or regulations: (i) the Commission shall permit a local exchange company or a competing local provider to offer competitive services with flexible pricing arrangements to business customers pursuant to contract and shall permit other flexible pricing options; and (ii) local exchange companies and competing local providers may provide a promotional offering for any tariffed service or tariffed offering by giving one day's notice to the Commission, but no Commission approval of the notice is required. Promotional offerings of any nontariffed service may be implemented without notice to the Commission or Commission approval. Carriers offering promotions of regulated services that are available for resale must provide a means for interested parties to receive notice of each promotional offering of regulated service, including the duration of the offering, at least one business day prior to the effective date of the promotional offering. Furthermore, local exchange companies and competing local providers may offer special promotions and bundles of new or existing service or products without the obligation to identify or convert existing customers who subscribe to the same or similar services or products. The Commission's complaint authority under

G.S. 62-73 and subsection (e) of this section is applicable to any promotion or bundled service offering filed or offered under this subsection.

(g) The following sections of Chapter 62 of the General Statutes shall not apply to local exchange companies subject to price regulation under the terms of subsection (a) of this section or electing companies subject to alternative regulation under the terms of subsection (h) or (m) of this section: G.S. 62-35(c), 62-45, 62-51, 62-81, 62-111, 62-130, 62-131, 62-132, 62-133, 62-134, 62-135, 62-136, 62-137, 62-139, 62-142, and 62-153.

(h) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, a local exchange company that is subject to rate of return regulation or subject to another form of regulation authorized under this section and whose territory is open to competition from competing local providers may elect to have its rates, terms, and conditions for its services determined pursuant to the plan described in this subsection by filing notice of its intent to do so with the Commission. The election is effective immediately upon filing. A local exchange company shall not be permitted to make the election under this section unless it commits to provide stand-alone basic residential lines to rural customers at rates that are less than or comparable to those rates charged to urban customers for the same service.

(1) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this subsection:

a. Local exchange company. – The same meaning as provided in G.S. 62-3(16a).

b. Open to competition from competing local providers. – Both of the following apply:

1. G.S. 62-110(f1) applies to the franchised area and to local exchange and exchange access services offered by the local exchange company.

2. The local exchange company is open to interconnection with competing local providers that possess a certificate of public convenience and necessity issued by the Commission. The Commission is authorized to resolve any disputes concerning whether a local exchange company is open to interconnection under this section.

c. Single-line basic residential service. – Single-line residential flat rate basic voice grade local service with touch tone within a traditional local calling area that provides access to available emergency services and directory assistance, the capability to access interconnecting carriers, relay services, access to operator services, and one annual local directory listing (white pages or the equivalent).

d. Stand-alone basic residential line. – Single-line basic residential service that is billed on a billing account that does not also contain another service, feature, or product that is sold by the local exchange company or an affiliate of the local exchange company and is billed on a recurring basis on the local exchange company's bill.

(2) Beginning on the date that the local exchange company's election under this subsection becomes effective, the local exchange company shall continue to offer stand-alone basic residential lines to all customers who choose to subscribe to that service, and the local exchange company may increase rates for those lines annually by a percentage that does not exceed the percentage

increase over the prior year in the Gross Domestic Product Price Index as reported by the United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, unless otherwise authorized by the Commission. With the sole exception of ensuring the local exchange company's compliance with the preceding sentence, the Commission shall not:

a. Impose any requirements related to the terms, conditions, rates, or availability of any of the local exchange company's stand-alone basic residential lines.
b. Otherwise regulate any of the local exchange company's stand-alone basic residential lines.

(3) Except to the extent provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, beginning on the date the local exchange company's election under this subsection becomes effective, the Commission shall not do any of the following:

a. Impose any requirements related to the terms, conditions, rates, or availability of any of the local exchange company's retail services.
b. Otherwise regulate any of the local exchange company's retail services.
c. Impose any tariffing requirements on any of the local exchange company's services that were not tariffed as of the date of the election; or impose any constraints on the rates of the local exchange company's services that were subject to full pricing flexibility as of the date of election.

(4) A local exchange company's election under this subsection does not affect the obligations or rights of an incumbent local exchange carrier, as that term is defined by section 251(h) of the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 (Act), under sections 251 and 252 of the Act or any Federal Communications Commission regulation relating to sections 251 and 252 of the Act, nor does it affect any authority of the Commission to act in accordance with federal or State laws or regulations, including those granting authority to set rates, terms, and conditions for access to unbundled network elements and to arbitrate and enforce interconnection agreements.

(5) A local exchange company's election under this subsection does not prevent a consumer from seeking the assistance of the Public Staff of the North Carolina Utilities Commission to resolve a complaint with that local exchange company, as provided in G.S. 62-73.1.

(6) A local exchange company's election under this subsection does not affect the Commission's jurisdiction concerning the following:

a. Enforce federal requirements on the local exchange company's marketing activities. However, the Commission may not adopt, impose, or enforce other requirements on the local exchange company's marketing activities.
b. The telecommunications relay service pursuant to G.S. 62-157.
c. The Life Line or Link Up programs consistent with Federal Communications Commission rules, including, but not limited to, 47 C.F.R. § 54.403(a)(3), as amended from time to time, and relevant orders of the North Carolina Utilities Commission.
d. Universal service funding pursuant to G.S. 62-110(f1).

e. Carrier of last resort obligations pursuant to G.S. 62-110.

f. The authority delegated to it by the Federal Communications Commission to manage the numbering resources involving that local exchange company.

g. Regulatory authority over the rates, terms, and conditions of wholesale services.

(i) A competing local provider authorized by the Commission to do business under the provisions of G.S. 62-110(f1) may also elect to have its rates, terms, and conditions for its services determined pursuant to the plans described in subsection (h) or (m) of this section. However, it is provided further that any provisions of subsection (h) of this section requiring the provision of a specific retail service or impacting the pricing of such service, including stand-alone residence service, shall not apply to competing local providers.

(j) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, the Commission has jurisdiction over matters concerning switched access and intercarrier compensation of a local exchange company that has elected to operate under price regulation, as well as a local exchange carrier or competing local provider operating under any form of regulation covered under this Article or G.S. 62-110(f1).

(k) To evaluate the affordability and quality of local exchange service provided to consumers in this State, a local exchange company or competing local provider offering basic local residential exchange service that elects to have its rates, terms, and conditions for its services determined pursuant to the plans described in subsection (h) or (m) of this section shall make an annual report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources, the chairs of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Natural, and Economic Resources, and the chairs of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources on the state of its company's operations. The report shall be due 30 days after the close of each calendar year and shall cover the period from January 1 through December 31 of the preceding year. The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources shall review the annual reports and shall decide whether to recommend that the General Assembly take corrective action in response to those reports. The report shall include the following:

(1) An analysis of telecommunications competition by the local exchange company or competing local provider, including access line gain or loss and the impact on consumer choices from the date the local exchange company makes its election to be subject to alternative regulation under the terms of subsection (h) or (m) of this section.

(2) An analysis of service quality based on customer satisfaction studies from the date the local exchange company makes its election to be subject to alternative regulation under the terms of subsection (h) or (m) of this section.

(3) An analysis of the level of local exchange rates from the date the local exchange company makes its election to be subject to alternative regulation under the terms of subsection (h) or (m) of this section.

(*l*) For a local exchange company that has made an election to be subject to alternative regulation under subsection (m) of this section, the requirement to report annually to the General Assembly under subsection (k) of this section shall no longer apply on and after the third anniversary following the date of the local exchange company's election.

(m) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, a local exchange company that is subject to rate of return regulation or subject to another form of regulation authorized under this section and who forgoes receipt of any funding from a State funding mechanism, other than interconnection rates, that may be established to support universal service as described in G.S. 62-110(f1) and whose territory is open to competition from competing local providers may elect to have its rates, terms, and conditions for its services determined pursuant to the plan described in this subsection by filing notice of its intent to do so with the Commission. The election is effective immediately upon filing. The terms "local exchange company" and "open to competition from competing local providers" shall have the same meanings as in subsection (h) of this section.

(1) Beginning on the date the local exchange company's election under this subsection becomes effective, the Commission shall not:
   a. Impose any requirements related to the terms, conditions, rates, or availability of any of the local exchange company's retail services, regardless of the technology used to provide these services.
   b. Otherwise regulate any of the local exchange company's retail services, regardless of the technology used to provide these services.
   c. Impose any tariffing requirements on any of the local exchange company's services that were not tariffed as of the date of the election, or impose any constraints on the rates of the local exchange company's services that were subject to full pricing flexibility as of the date of election.

(2) A local exchange company's election under this subsection does not affect the obligations or rights of an incumbent local exchange carrier, as that term is defined by section 251(h) of the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 (Act), under sections 251 and 252 of the Act, or any Federal Communications Commission regulation relating to sections 251 and 252 of the Act.

(3) A local exchange company's election under this subsection does not affect the Commission's jurisdiction concerning:
   a. Enforcement of federal requirements on the local exchange company's marketing activities as set forth in 47 U.S.C. Part 64. However, the Commission may not adopt, impose, or enforce other requirements on the local exchange company's marketing activities.
   b. The telecommunications relay service pursuant to G.S. 62-157.
   c. The Life Line or Link Up programs consistent with Federal Communications Commission rules and relevant orders of the North Carolina Utilities Commission.
   d. Universal service funding pursuant to G.S. 62-110(f1).
   e. The authority delegated to it by the Federal Communications Commission to manage the numbering resources involving that local exchange company.
   f. Regulatory authority over the rates, terms, and conditions of wholesale services.
   g. The Commission's authority under section 214(e) of the Federal Communications Act of 1934, consistent with Federal Communications Commission rules.

h. The authority of the Commission to act in accordance with federal or State laws or regulations, including those granting authority to set rates, terms, and conditions for access to unbundled network elements and to arbitrate and enforce interconnection agreements.

(4) A local exchange company's election under this subsection does not prevent a consumer from seeking the assistance of the Public Staff of the North Carolina Utilities Commission to resolve a complaint with that local exchange company, as provided in G.S. 62-73.1. (1995, c. 27, s. 6; 2003-91, s. 2; 2007-157, s. 1; 2009-238, ss. 1-4; 2009-570, s. 36; 2010-173, ss. 1-3; 2011-52, s. 3; 2011-291, s. 2.12; 2017-57, s. 14.1(u).)

§ 62-133.6. Environmental compliance costs recovery.

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "Coal-fired generating unit" means a coal-fired generating unit, as defined by 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 96.2 (July 1, 2001 Edition), that is located in this State and has the capacity to generate 25 or more megawatts of electricity.

(2) "Environmental compliance costs" means only those capital costs incurred by an investor-owned public utility to comply with the emissions limitations set out in G.S. 143-215.107D that exceed the costs required to comply with 42 U.S.C. § 7410(a)(2)(D)(i)(I), as implemented by 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 51.121 (July 1, 2001 Edition), related federal regulations, and the associated State or Federal Implementation Plan, or with 42 U.S.C. § 7426, as implemented by 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 52.34 (July 1, 2001 Edition) and related federal regulations. The term "environmental compliance costs" does not include:

a. Costs required to comply with a final order or judgment rendered by a state or federal court under which an investor-owned public utility is found liable for a failure to comply with any federal or state law, rule, or regulation for the protection of the environment or public health.

b. The net increase in costs, above those proposed by the investor-owned public utility as part of its plan to achieve compliance with the emissions limitations set out in G.S. 143-215.107D, that are necessary to comply with a settlement agreement, consent decree, or similar resolution of litigation arising from any alleged failure to comply with any federal or state law, rule, or regulation for the protection of the environment or public health.

c. Any criminal or civil fine or penalty, including court costs imposed or assessed for a violation by an investor-owned public utility of any federal or state law, rule, or regulation for the protection of the environment or public health.

d. The net increase in costs, above those proposed by the investor-owned public utility as part of its plan to achieve the emissions limitations set out in G.S. 143-215.107D, that are necessary to comply with any limitation on emissions of oxides of nitrogen (NOx) or sulfur dioxide (SO2) that are imposed on an individual coal-fired generating unit by the Environmental Management Commission or the Department of

Environmental Quality to address any nonattainment of an air quality standard in any area of the State.

(3) "Investor-owned public utility" means an investor-owned public utility, as defined in G.S. 62-3.

(b) The investor-owned public utilities shall be allowed to accelerate the cost recovery of their estimated environmental compliance costs over a seven-year period, beginning January 1, 2003 and ending December 31, 2009. For purposes of this subsection, an investor-owned public utility subject to the provisions of subsections (b) and (d) of G.S. 143-215.107D shall amortize environmental compliance costs in the amount of one billion five hundred million dollars ($1,500,000,000) and an investor-owned public utility subject to the provisions of subsections (c) and (e) of G.S. 143-215.107D shall amortize environmental compliance costs in the amount of eight hundred thirteen million dollars ($813,000,000). During the rate freeze period established in subsection (e) of this section, the investor-owned public utilities shall, at a minimum, recover through amortization seventy percent (70%) of the environmental compliance costs set out in this subsection. The maximum amount for each investor-owned public utility's annual accelerated cost recovery during the rate freeze period shall not exceed one hundred fifty percent (150%) of the annual levelized environmental compliance costs set out in this subsection. The amounts to be amortized pursuant to this subsection are estimates of the environmental compliance costs that may be adjusted as provided in this section. The General Assembly makes no judgment as to whether the actual environmental compliance costs will be greater than, less than, or equal to these estimated amounts. These estimated amounts do not define or limit the scope of the expenditures that may be necessary to comply with the emissions limitations set out in G.S. 143-215.107D.

(c) The investor-owned public utilities shall file their compliance plans, including initial cost estimates, with the Commission and the Department of Environmental Quality not later than 10 days after the date on which this section becomes effective. The Commission shall consult with the Secretary of Environmental Quality and shall consider the advice of the Secretary as to whether an investor-owned public utility's proposed compliance plan is adequate to achieve the emissions limitations set out in G.S. 143-215.107D.

(d) Subject to the provisions of subsection (f) of this section, the Commission shall hold a hearing to review the environmental compliance costs set out in subsection (b) of this section. The Commission may modify and revise those costs as necessary to ensure that they are just, reasonable, and prudent based on the most recent cost information available and determine the annual cost recovery amounts that each investor-owned public utility shall be required to record and recover during calendar years 2008 and 2009. In making its decisions pursuant to this subsection, the Commission shall consult with the Secretary of Environmental Quality to receive advice as to whether the investor-owned public utility's actual and proposed modifications and permitting and construction schedule are adequate to achieve the emissions limitations set out in G.S. 143-215.107D. The Commission shall issue an order pursuant to this subsection no later than December 31, 2007.

(e) Notwithstanding G.S. 62-130(d) and G.S. 62-136(a), the base rates of the investor-owned public utilities shall remain unchanged from the date on which this section becomes effective through December 31, 2007. The Commission may, however, consistent with the public interest:

(1) Allow adjustments to base rates, or deferral of costs or revenues, due to one or more of the following conditions occurring during the rate freeze period:

a. Governmental action resulting in significant cost reductions or requiring major expenditures including, but not limited to, the cost of compliance with any law, regulation, or rule for the protection of the environment or public health, other than environmental compliance costs.
b. Major expenditures to restore or replace property damaged or destroyed by force majeure.
c. A severe threat to the financial stability of the investor-owned public utility resulting from other extraordinary causes beyond the reasonable control of the investor-owned public utility.
d. The investor-owned public utility persistently earns a return substantially in excess of the rate of return established and found reasonable by the Commission in the investor-owned public utility's last general rate case.

(2) Approve any reduction in a rate or rates applicable to a customer or class of customers during the rate freeze period, if requested to do so by an investor-owned public utility that is subject to the emissions limitations set out in G.S. 143-215.107D.

(f) In any general rate case initiated to adjust base rates effective on or after January 1, 2008, the investor-owned public utility shall be allowed to recover its actual environmental compliance costs in accordance with Article 7 of this Chapter less the cumulative amount of accelerated cost recovery recorded pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

(g) Consistent with the public interest, the Commission is authorized to approve proposals submitted by an investor-owned public utility to implement optional, market-based rates and services, provided the proposal does not increase base rates during the period of time referred to in subsection (e) of this section.

(h) Nothing in this section shall prohibit the Commission from taking any actions otherwise appropriate to enforce investor-owned public utility compliance with applicable statutes or Commission rules or to order any appropriate remedy for such noncompliance allowed by law.

(i) An investor-owned public utility that is subject to the emissions limitations set out in G.S. 143-215.107D shall submit to the Commission and to the Department of Environmental Quality on or before April 1 of each year a verified statement that contains all of the following:

(1) A detailed report on the investor-owned public utility's plans for meeting the emissions limitations set out in G.S. 143-215.107D.
(2) The actual environmental compliance costs incurred by the investor-owned public utility in the previous calendar year, including a description of the construction undertaken and completed during that year.
(3) The amount of the investor-owned public utility's environmental compliance costs amortized in the previous calendar year.
(4) An estimate of the investor-owned public utility's environmental compliance costs and the basis for any revisions of those estimates when compared to the estimates submitted during the previous year.
(5) A description of all permits required in order to comply with the provisions of G.S. 143-215.107D for which the investor-owned public utility has applied and the status of those permits or permit applications.
(6) A description of the construction related to compliance with the provisions of G.S. 143-215.107D that is anticipated during the following year.

(7) A description of the applications for permits required in order to comply with the provisions of G.S. 143-215.107D that are anticipated during the following year.
(8) The results of equipment testing related to compliance with G.S. 143-215.107D.
(9) The number of tons of oxides of nitrogen (NOx) and sulfur dioxide (SO2) emitted during the previous calendar year from the coal-fired generating units that are subject to the emissions limitations set out in G.S. 143-215.107D.
(10) The emissions allowances described in G.S. 143-215.107D(i) that are acquired by the investor-owned public utility that result from compliance with the emissions limitations set out in G.S. 143-215.107D.
(11) Any other information requested by the Commission or the Department of Environmental Quality.

(j) The Secretary shall review the information submitted pursuant to subsection (i) of this section and determine whether the investor-owned public utility's actual and proposed modifications and permitting and construction schedule are adequate to achieve the emissions limitations set out in G.S. 143-215.107D and shall advise the Commission as to the Secretary's findings and recommendations.

(k) Any information, advice, findings, recommendations, or determinations provided by the Secretary pursuant to this section shall not constitute a final agency decision within the meaning of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes and shall not be subject to review under that Chapter. (2002-4, s. 9; 2015-241, s. 14.30(u), (v).)

§ 62-133.7. Customer usage tracking rate adjustment mechanisms for natural gas local distribution company rates.

In setting rates for a natural gas local distribution company in a general rate case proceeding under G.S. 62-133, the Commission may adopt, implement, modify, or eliminate a rate adjustment mechanism for one or more of the company's rate schedules, excluding industrial rate schedules, to track and true-up variations in average per customer usage from levels approved in the general rate case proceeding. The Commission may adopt a rate adjustment mechanism only upon a finding by the Commission that the mechanism is appropriate to track and true-up variations in average per customer usage by rate schedule from levels adopted in the general rate case proceeding and that the mechanism is in the public interest. (2007-227, s. 1.)

§ 62-133.7A. Rate adjustment mechanisms for natural gas local distribution company rates.

(a) In setting rates for a natural gas local distribution company in a general rate case proceeding under G.S. 62-133, the Commission may adopt, implement, modify, or eliminate rate adjustment mechanisms to enable the company to recover the prudently incurred capital investment and associated costs of any of the following, including a return based on the company's then authorized return:
(1) Complying with federal gas pipeline safety requirements.
(2) Producing and transporting natural gas, as defined in G.S. 62-133.4(e)(3), or consistent with the intent and purpose of G.S. 62-133.4.

(b) The Commission shall adopt, implement, modify, or eliminate any of the rate adjustment mechanisms authorized under this section only upon a finding by the Commission that the mechanism is in the public interest. (2013-54, s. 1; 2024-45, s. 13(b).)

§ 62-133.8. Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (CEPS).

(a) Definitions. – As used in this section:

(1) "Clean energy facility" means a renewable energy facility, a nuclear energy facility, including an uprate to a nuclear energy facility, or a fusion energy facility.

(1a) "Clean energy resource" means renewable energy resources, nuclear energy resources, including an uprate to a nuclear energy facility, and fusion energy.

(1b) "Combined heat and power system" means a system that uses waste heat to produce electricity or useful, measurable thermal or mechanical energy at a retail electric customer's facility.

(2) "Demand-side management" means activities, programs, or initiatives undertaken by an electric power supplier or its customers to shift the timing of electricity use from peak to nonpeak demand periods. "Demand-side management" includes, but is not limited to, load management, electric system equipment and operating controls, direct load control, and interruptible load.

(3) "Electric power supplier" means a public utility, an electric membership corporation, or a municipality that sells electric power to retail electric power customers in the State.

(3a) "Electricity demand reduction" means a measurable reduction in the electricity demand of a retail electric customer that is voluntary, under the real-time control of both the electric power supplier and the retail electric customer, and measured in real time, using two-way communications devices that communicate on the basis of standards.

(4) "Energy efficiency measure" means an equipment, physical, or program change implemented after January 1, 2007, that results in less energy used to perform the same function. "Energy efficiency measure" includes, but is not limited to, energy produced from a combined heat and power system that uses non-clean energy resources. "Energy efficiency measure" does not include demand-side management.

(4a) "Fusion" means a reaction in which at least one heavier, more stable nucleus is produced from two lighter, less stable nuclei, typically through high temperatures and pressures, emitting energy as a result.

(4b) "Fusion energy" means the product of fusion reactions inside a fusion device, used for the purpose of generating electricity or other commercially usable forms of energy.

(4c) "New clean energy facility" means:

a. A new renewable energy facility; or

b. Facilities placed into service on or after January 1, 2007, which are either (i) a nuclear energy facility, including an uprate to a nuclear energy facility, or (ii) a fusion energy facility.

(5) "New renewable energy facility" means a renewable energy facility that either:

a. Was placed into service on or after January 1, 2007.

b. Delivers or has delivered electric power to an electric power supplier pursuant to a contract with NC GreenPower Corporation that was entered into prior to January 1, 2007.

c. Is a hydroelectric power facility with a generation capacity of 10 megawatts or less that delivers electric power to an electric power supplier.

(6) "Renewable energy certificate" means a tradable instrument that is equal to one megawatt hour of electricity or equivalent energy supplied by a clean energy facility, new clean energy facility, or reduced by implementation of an energy efficiency measure that is used to track and verify compliance with the requirements of this section as determined by the Commission. A "renewable energy certificate" does not include the related emission reductions, including, but not limited to, reductions of sulfur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, mercury, or carbon dioxide.

(7) "Renewable energy facility" means a facility, other than a hydroelectric power facility with a generation capacity of more than 10 megawatts, that either:

a. Generates electric power by the use of a renewable energy resource.

b. Generates useful, measurable combined heat and power derived from a renewable energy resource.

c. Is a solar thermal energy facility.

(8) "Renewable energy resource" means a solar electric, solar thermal, wind, hydropower, geothermal, or ocean current or wave energy resource; a biomass resource, including agricultural waste, animal waste, wood waste, spent pulping liquors, combustible residues, combustible liquids, combustible gases, energy crops, or landfill methane; waste heat derived from a renewable energy resource and used to produce electricity or useful, measurable thermal energy at a retail electric customer's facility; or hydrogen derived from a renewable energy resource. "Renewable energy resource" does not include peat, a fossil fuel, or nuclear energy resource.

(b) Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency Standards (CEPS) for Electric Public Utilities. –

(1) Each electric public utility in the State shall be subject to a Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (CEPS) according to the following schedule:

Calendar Year	**CEPS Requirement**
2012	3% of 2011 North Carolina retail sales
2015	6% of 2014 North Carolina retail sales
2018	10% of 2017 North Carolina retail sales
2021 and thereafter	12.5% of 2020 North Carolina retail sales

(2) An electric public utility may meet the requirements of this section by any one or more of the following:

a. Generate electric power at a new clean energy facility.

b. Use a clean energy resource to generate electric power at a generating facility other than the generation of electric power from waste heat derived from the combustion of fossil fuel.

c. Reduce energy consumption through the implementation of an energy efficiency measure; provided, however, an electric public utility subject to the provisions of this subsection may meet up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the requirements of this section through savings due to

implementation of energy efficiency measures. Beginning in calendar year 2021 and each year thereafter, an electric public utility may meet up to forty percent (40%) of the requirements of this section through savings due to implementation of energy efficiency measures.

d. Purchase electric power from a new clean energy facility. Electric power purchased from a new clean energy facility located outside the geographic boundaries of the State shall meet the requirements of this section if the electric power is delivered to a public utility that provides electric power to retail electric customers in the State; provided, however, the electric public utility shall not sell the renewable energy certificates created pursuant to this paragraph to another electric public utility.

e. Purchase renewable energy certificates derived from in-State or out-of-state new clean energy facilities. Certificates derived from out-of-state new clean energy facilities shall not be used to meet more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the requirements of this section, provided that this limitation shall not apply to an electric public utility with less than 150,000 North Carolina retail jurisdictional customers as of December 31, 2006.

f. Use electric power that is supplied by a new clean energy facility or saved due to the implementation of an energy efficiency measure that exceeds the requirements of this section for any calendar year as a credit towards the requirements of this section in the following calendar year or sell the associated renewable energy certificates.

g. Electricity demand reduction.

(c) Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency Standards (CEPS) for Electric Membership Corporations and Municipalities. –

(1) Each electric membership corporation or municipality that sells electric power to retail electric power customers in the State shall be subject to a Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (CEPS) according to the following schedule:

Calendar Year	**CEPS Requirement**
2012	3% of 2011 North Carolina retail sales
2015	6% of 2014 North Carolina retail sales
2018 and thereafter	10% of 2017 North Carolina retail sales

(2) An electric membership corporation or municipality may meet the requirements of this section by any one or more of the following:

a. Generate electric power at a new clean energy facility.

b. Reduce energy consumption through the implementation of demand-side management or energy efficiency measures.

c. Purchase electric power from a clean energy facility or a hydroelectric power facility, provided that no more than thirty percent (30%) of the requirements of this section may be met with hydroelectric power, including allocations made by the Southeastern Power Administration.

d. Purchase renewable energy certificates derived from in-State or out-of-state clean energy facilities. An electric power supplier subject to

the requirements of this subsection may use certificates derived from out-of-state clean energy facilities to meet no more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the requirements of this section.

e. Acquire all or part of its electric power through a wholesale purchase power agreement with a wholesale supplier of electric power whose portfolio of supply and demand options meets the requirements of this section.

f. Use electric power that is supplied by a new clean energy facility or saved due to the implementation of demand-side management or energy efficiency measures that exceeds the requirements of this section for any calendar year as a credit towards the requirements of this section in the following calendar year or sell the associated renewable energy certificates.

g. Electricity demand reduction.

(d) Compliance With CEPS Requirement Through Use of Solar Energy Resources. – For calendar year 2018 and for each calendar year thereafter, at least two-tenths of one percent (0.2%) of the total electric power in kilowatt hours sold to retail electric customers in the State, or an equivalent amount of energy, shall be supplied by a combination of new solar electric facilities and new metered solar thermal energy facilities that use one or more of the following applications: solar hot water, solar absorption cooling, solar dehumidification, solar thermally driven refrigeration, and solar industrial process heat. The terms of any contract entered into between an electric power supplier and a new solar electric facility or new metered solar thermal energy facility shall be of sufficient length to stimulate development of solar energy; provided, the Commission shall develop a procedure to determine if an electric power supplier is in compliance with the provisions of this subsection if a new solar electric facility or a new metered solar thermal energy facility fails to meet the terms of its contract with the electric power supplier. As used in this subsection, "new" means a facility that was first placed into service on or after January 1, 2007. The electric power suppliers shall comply with the requirements of this subsection according to the following schedule:

Calendar Year	**Requirement for Solar Energy Resources**
2010	0.02%
2012	0.07%
2015	0.14%
2018	0.20%

(e) Compliance With CEPS Requirement Through Use of Swine Waste Resources. – For calendar year 2018 and for each calendar year thereafter, at least two-tenths of one percent (0.2%) of the total electric power in kilowatt hours sold to retail electric customers in the State shall be supplied, or contracted for supply in each year, by swine waste. The electric power suppliers, in the aggregate, shall comply with the requirements of this subsection according to the following schedule:

Calendar Year	**Requirement for Swine Waste Resources**
2012	0.07%
2015	0.14%
2018	0.20%

(f) Compliance With CEPS Requirement Through Use of Poultry Waste Resources. – For calendar year 2014 and for each calendar year thereafter, at least 900,000 megawatt hours of the

total electric power sold to retail electric customers in the State or an equivalent amount of energy shall be supplied, or contracted for supply in each year, by poultry waste combined with wood shavings, straw, rice hulls, or other bedding material. The electric power suppliers, in the aggregate, shall comply with the requirements of this subsection according to the following schedule:

Calendar Year	Requirement for Poultry Waste Resources
2012	170,000 megawatt hours
2013	700,000 megawatt hours
2014	900,000 megawatt hours

(g) Control of Emissions. – As used in this subsection, Best Available Control Technology (BACT) means an emissions limitation based on the maximum degree a reduction in the emission of air pollutants that is achievable for a facility, taking into account energy, environmental, and economic impacts and other costs. A biomass combustion process at any new clean energy facility that delivers electric power to an electric power supplier shall meet BACT. The Environmental Management Commission shall determine on a case-by-case basis the BACT for a facility that would not otherwise be required to comply with BACT pursuant to the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) emissions program. The Environmental Management Commission may adopt rules to implement this subsection. In adopting rules, the Environmental Management Commission shall take into account cumulative and secondary impacts associated with the concentration of biomass facilities in close proximity to one another. In adopting rules the Environmental Management Commission shall provide for the manner in which a facility that would not otherwise be required to comply with BACT pursuant to the PSD emissions programs shall meet the BACT requirement. This subsection shall not apply to a facility that qualifies as a new clean energy facility under sub-subdivision b. of subdivision (5) of subsection (a) of this section.

(h) Cost Recovery and Customer Charges. –

(1) For the purposes of this subsection, the term "incremental costs" means all reasonable and prudent costs incurred by an electric power supplier to:

a. Comply with the requirements of subsections (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of this section that are in excess of the electric power supplier's avoided costs other than those costs recovered pursuant to G.S. 62-133.9.

b. Fund research that encourages the development of renewable energy, energy efficiency, or improved air quality, provided those costs do not exceed one million dollars ($1,000,000) per year.

c. Comply with any federal mandate that is similar to the requirements of subsections (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of this section that exceed the costs that the electric power supplier would have incurred under those subsections in the absence of the federal mandate.

d. Provide incentives to customers, including program costs, incurred pursuant to G.S. 62-155(f).

(2) All reasonable and prudent costs incurred by an electric power supplier to comply with any federal mandate that is similar to the requirements of subsections (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of this section, including, but not limited to, the avoided costs associated with a federal mandate that exceeds the avoided costs that the electric power supplier would have incurred pursuant to subsections (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of this section in the absence of the federal mandate, shall be recovered by the electric power supplier in an annual rider

charge assessed in accordance with the schedule set out in subdivision (4) of this subsection increased by the Commission on a pro rata basis to allow for full and complete recovery of all reasonable and prudent costs incurred to comply with the federal mandate.

(3) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, the total annual incremental cost to be incurred by an electric power supplier and recovered from the electric power supplier's retail customers shall not exceed an amount equal to the per-account annual charges set out in subdivision (4) of this subsection applied to the electric power supplier's total number of customer accounts determined as of December 31 of the previous calendar year. An electric power supplier shall be conclusively deemed to be in compliance with the requirements of subsections (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of this section if the electric power supplier's total annual incremental costs incurred equals an amount equal to the per-account annual charges set out in subdivision (4) of this subsection applied to the electric power supplier's total number of customer accounts determined as of December 31 of the previous calendar year. The total annual incremental cost recoverable by an electric power supplier from an individual customer shall not exceed the per-account charges set out in subdivision (4) of this subsection except as these charges may be adjusted in subdivision (2) of this subsection.

(4) An electric power supplier shall be allowed to recover the incremental costs incurred to comply with the requirements of subsections (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of this section and fund research as provided in subdivision (1) of this subsection through an annual rider not to exceed the following per-account annual charges:

Customer Class	**2008-2011**	**2012-2014**	**2015 and thereafter**
Residential per account	$10.00	$12.00	$27.00
Commercial per account	$50.00	$150.00	$150.00
Industrial per account	$500.00	$1,000.00	$1,000.00

(5) The Commission shall adopt rules to establish a procedure for the annual assessment of the per-account charges set out in this subsection to an electric public utility's customers to allow for timely recovery of all reasonable and prudent costs of compliance with the requirements of subsections (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of this section and to fund research as provided in subdivision (1) of this subsection. The Commission shall ensure that the costs to be recovered from individual customers on a per-account basis pursuant to subdivisions (2) and (3) of this subsection are in the same proportion as the per-account annual charges for each customer class set out in subdivision (4) of this subsection.

(i) Adoption of Rules. – The Commission shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section. In developing rules, the Commission shall:

(1) Provide for the monitoring of compliance with and enforcement of the requirements of this section.

(2) Include a procedure to modify or delay the provisions of subsections (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of this section in whole or in part if the Commission determines that it is in the public interest to do so. The procedure adopted pursuant to this subdivision shall include a requirement that the electric power supplier

demonstrate that it made a reasonable effort to meet the requirements set out in this section.

(3) Ensure that energy credited toward compliance with the provisions of this section not be credited toward any other purpose, including another clean energy portfolio standard or voluntary clean energy purchase program in this State or any other state.

(4) Establish standards for interconnection of clean energy facilities and other nonutility-owned generation with a generation capacity of 10 megawatts or less to an electric public utility's distribution system; provided, however, that the Commission shall adopt, if appropriate, federal interconnection standards. The standards adopted pursuant to this subdivision shall include an expedited review process for swine and poultry waste to energy projects of two megawatts (MW) or less and other measures necessary and appropriate to achieve the objectives of subsections (e) and (f) of this section.

(5) Ensure that the owner and operator of each clean energy facility that delivers electric power to an electric power supplier is in substantial compliance with all federal and state laws, regulations, and rules for the protection of the environment and conservation of natural resources.

(6) Consider whether it is in the public interest to adopt rules for electric public utilities for net metering of clean energy facilities with a generation capacity of one megawatt or less.

(7) Develop procedures to track and account for renewable energy certificates, including ownership of renewable energy certificates that are derived from a customer owned clean energy facility as a result of any action by a customer of an electric power supplier that is independent of a program sponsored by the electric power supplier.

(j) Repealed by Session Laws 2021-23, s. 16, effective May 17, 2021.

(k) Tracking of Renewable Energy Certificates. – No later than July 1, 2010, the Commission shall develop, implement, and maintain a website for the online tracking of renewable energy certificates in order to verify the compliance of electric power suppliers with the CEPS requirements of this section and to facilitate the establishment of a market for the purchase and sale of renewable energy certificates.

(*l*) [Registration of Facilities. –] The owner, including an electric power supplier, of each clean energy facility or new clean energy facility, whether or not required to obtain a certificate of public convenience and necessity pursuant to G.S. 62-110.1, that intends for renewable energy certificates it earns to be eligible for use by an electric power supplier to comply with G.S. 62-133.8 shall register the facility with the Commission. Such an owner shall file a registration statement in the form prescribed by the Commission and remit to the Commission the fee required pursuant to G.S. 62-300(a)(16). (2007-397, s. 2(a); 2009-475, s. 14(a); 2011-55, ss. 1, 2, 3; 2011-291, s. 2.13; 2011-309, s. 2; 2011-394, s. 1; 2015-241, s. 14.30(u); 2017-57, s. 14.1(p); 2017-192, ss. 7, 8(b), 10(a), 5.1(a); 2021-23, s. 16; 2023-138, s. 1(a); 2025-25, s. 29(5).)

§ 62-133.8A. Additional credit for use of swine waste resources.

(a) For purposes of this section:

(1) The definitions set forth in G.S. 62-133.8 apply.

(2) The term "enhanced credit RECs" refers to the additional RECs credited under this section and does not include the original REC produced.

(3) The term "tier" refers to the development tier designated by the North Carolina Secretary of Commerce under G.S. 143B-437.08 for the calendar year during which the project's new renewable energy facility registration statement is submitted to the Commission.

(4) The term "REC" means a renewable energy certificate as defined in G.S. 62-133.8(6).

(b) A new renewable energy facility located in a Tier 1 county that produces RECs as provided in G.S. 62-133.8(e) using in-State sourced swine waste resources shall be eligible for a one-time enhanced credit REC stimulus for a period as follows:

(1) For the first eight years following the effective date of this section for currently operating facilities, or from the commercial operation date for newly constructed facilities, for every one REC produced by the facility, the facility shall be credited with two additional, enhanced credit RECs.

(2) For the succeeding six years, for every one REC produced by the facility, the facility shall be credited with one additional, enhanced credit REC.

(c) The enhanced credit RECs created under this section may be used by electric power suppliers for compliance with the swine waste set aside requirements of G.S. 62-133.8(e).

(d) No facility shall be credited with more than 80,000 enhanced credit RECs in any one year but may continue to generate RECs without enhanced credit. (2024-57, s. 3F.3.)

§ 62-133.9. Cost recovery for demand-side management and energy efficiency measures.

(a) The definitions set out in G.S. 62-133.8 apply to this section. As used in this section, "new," used in connection with demand-side management or energy efficiency measure, means a demand-side management or energy efficiency measure that is adopted and implemented on or after January 1, 2007, including subsequent changes and modifications.

(b) Each electric power supplier shall implement demand-side management and energy efficiency measures and use supply-side resources to establish the least cost mix of demand reduction and generation measures that meet the electricity needs of its customers. An electric membership corporation or municipality that qualifies as an electric power supplier may satisfy the requirements of this section through its purchases from a wholesale supplier of electric power that uses supply-side resources and demand-side management to meet all or a portion of the supply needs of its members and their retail customers, and that, by aggregating and promoting demand-side management and energy efficiency measures for its members, meets the requirements of this section.

(c) Each electric power supplier to which G.S. 62-110.1 applies shall include an assessment of demand-side management and energy efficiency in its resource plans submitted to the Commission and shall submit cost-effective demand-side management and energy efficiency options that require incentives to the Commission for approval.

(d) The Commission shall, upon petition of an electric public utility, approve an annual rider to the electric public utility's rates to recover all reasonable and prudent costs incurred for adoption and implementation of new demand-side management and new energy efficiency measures. Recoverable costs include, but are not limited to, all capital costs, including cost of capital and depreciation expenses, administrative costs, implementation costs, incentive payments

to program participants, and operating costs. In determining the amount of any rider, the Commission:

(1) Shall allow electric public utilities to capitalize all or a portion of those costs to the extent that those costs are intended to produce future benefits.

(2) May approve other incentives to electric public utilities for adopting and implementing new demand-side management and energy efficiency measures. Allowable incentives may include:

a. Appropriate rewards based on the sharing of savings achieved by the demand-side management and energy efficiency measures.

b. Appropriate rewards based on capitalization of a percentage of avoided costs achieved by demand-side management and energy efficiency measures.

c. Any other incentives that the Commission determines to be appropriate.

(e) The Commission shall determine the appropriate assignment of costs of new demand-side management and energy efficiency measures for electric public utilities and shall assign the costs of the programs only to the class or classes of customers that directly benefit from the programs.

(f) None of the costs of new demand-side management or energy efficiency measures of an electric power supplier shall be assigned to any industrial customer that notifies the industrial customer's electric power supplier that, at the industrial customer's own expense, the industrial customer has implemented at any time in the past or, in accordance with stated, quantified goals for demand-side management and energy efficiency, will implement alternative demand-side management and energy efficiency measures and that the industrial customer elects not to participate in demand-side management or energy efficiency measures under this section. The electric power supplier that provides electric service to the industrial customer, an industrial customer that receives electric service from the electric power supplier, the Public Staff, or the Commission on its own motion, may initiate a complaint proceeding before the Commission to challenge the validity of the notification of nonparticipation. The procedures set forth in G.S. 62-73, 62-74, and 62-75 shall govern any such complaint. The provisions of this subsection shall also apply to commercial customers with significant annual usage at a threshold level to be established by the Commission.

(g) An electric public utility shall not charge an industrial or commercial customer for the costs of installing demand-side management equipment on the customer's premises if the customer provides, at the customer's expense, equivalent demand-side management equipment.

(h) The Commission shall adopt rules to implement this section.

(i) The Commission shall submit to the Governor and to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources, the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Natural, and Economic Resources, and the chairs of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources a summary of the proceedings conducted pursuant to this section during the preceding two fiscal years on or before September 1 of odd-numbered years. (2007-397, s. 4(a); 2011-291, s. 2.14; 2017-57, s. 14.1(p).)

§ 62-133.10: Repealed by Session Laws 2021-23, s. 17, effective May 17, 2021.

§ 62-133.11. Rate adjustment for changes in costs based on third-party rates.

(a) The Commission shall permit a water or sewer public utility to adjust its rates approved pursuant to G.S. 62-133 to reflect changes in costs based solely upon changes in the rates imposed by third-party suppliers of purchased water or sewer service, including applicable taxes and fees.

(b) Any water or sewer public utility seeking to adjust its rates pursuant to this section shall file a verified petition in such form and detail as the Commission may require.

(c) The Commission shall issue an order approving, denying, or approving with modifications a rate adjustment requested pursuant to this section within 60 days of the date of filing of a completed petition, unless that time is for good cause extended up to a maximum of 90 days. (2013-106, s. 1.)

§ 62-133.12. Rate adjustment mechanism based on investment in repair, improvement, and replacement of water and sewer facilities.

(a) The Commission may approve a rate adjustment mechanism in a general rate proceeding pursuant to G.S. 62-133 to allow a water or sewer public utility to recover through a system improvement charge the incremental depreciation expense and capital costs associated with the utility's reasonable and prudently incurred investment in eligible water and sewer system improvements. The Commission shall approve a rate adjustment mechanism authorized by this section only upon a finding that the mechanism is in the public interest. The frequency and manner of rate adjustments under the mechanism shall be as prescribed by the Commission.

(b) For purposes of this section, "eligible water system improvements" or "eligible sewer system improvements" shall include only those improvements found necessary by the Commission to enable the water or sewer utility to provide safe, reliable, and efficient service in accordance with applicable water quality and effluent standards.

(c) For purposes of this section, "eligible water system improvements" means:

(1) Distribution system mains, valves, utility service lines (including meter boxes and appurtenances), meters, hydrants, hydro tanks, and pumping equipment installed as replacements.

(2) Main extensions installed to eliminate dead ends and to implement solutions to regional water supply in order to comply with primary and, upon specific Commission approval, secondary drinking water standards.

(3) Equipment and infrastructure installed to comply with primary drinking water standards.

(4) Equipment and infrastructure installed at the direction of the Commission to comply with secondary drinking water standards or other health or environmental standards established by federal, State, or local governments.

(5) Unreimbursed costs of relocating facilities due to roadway projects.

(d) For the purposes of this section, "eligible sewer system improvements" means:

(1) Collection main extensions installed to implement solutions to wastewater problems.

(2) Repealed by Session Laws 2021-149, s. 2, effective September 10, 2021.

(3) Unreimbursed costs of relocating facilities due to roadway projects.

(4) Replacement or improvement of force mains, gravity mains, service lines, pumps, motors, blowers, and other electrical or mechanical equipment.

(e) The Commission shall provide for audit and reconciliation procedures, including measures for refunds of any over-collections under the system improvement charge with interest pursuant to G.S. 62-130(e).

(f) The Commission may eliminate or modify any rate adjustment mechanism authorized pursuant to this section upon a finding that it is not in the public interest.

(g) Cumulative system improvement charges for a water or sewer utility pursuant to a rate adjustment mechanism approved by the Commission under this section may not exceed seven and one-half percent (7.5%) of the total annual service revenues approved by the Commission in the water or sewer utility's last general rate case. Unreimbursed costs incurred for projects that are eligible under subdivisions (c)(5) and (d)(3) of this section shall be exempt from the percentage limitation imposed by this subsection on cumulative system improvement charges based upon annual service revenues. Accumulated depreciation for eligible water or sewer system improvements shall be updated in each filing submitted by a utility within the same docket. " (2013-106, s. 2; 2021-149, s. 2.)

§ 62-133.12A. Customer usage tracking rate adjustment mechanisms for water and wastewater rates.

In setting rates for a water and wastewater utility in a general rate proceeding under G.S. 62-133, the Commission may adopt, implement, modify, or eliminate a rate adjustment mechanism for one or more of the company's rate schedules to track and true-up variations in average per customer usage from levels approved in the general rate case proceeding. The Commission may adopt a rate adjustment mechanism only upon a finding by the Commission that the mechanism is appropriate to track and true-up variations in average per customer usage by rate schedule from levels adopted in the general rate case proceeding and the mechanism is in the public interest. (2019-88, s. 1.)

§ 62-133.12B. Computation of income tax expense for ratemaking purposes; taxable contributions.

A water or wastewater public utility is solely responsible for funding the income taxes on taxable contributions in aid of construction and customer advances for construction and shall record the income taxes the water or wastewater utility pays in accumulated deferred income taxes for accounting and ratemaking purposes. (2021-23, s. 25; 2021-76, s. 4.)

§ 62-133.13. Recovery of costs related to unlawful discharges from coal combustion residuals surface impoundments to the surface waters of the State.

The Commission shall not allow an electric public utility to recover from the retail electric customers of the State costs resulting from an unlawful discharge to the surface waters of the State from a coal combustion residuals surface impoundment, unless the Commission determines the discharge was due to an event of force majeure. For the purposes of this section, "coal combustion residuals surface impoundments" has the same meaning as in G.S. 130A-309.201. For the purposes of this section, "unlawful discharge" means a discharge that results in a violation of State or federal surface water quality standards. (2014-122, s. 1(a).)

§ 62-133.14. Cost recovery for acquisition of joint municipal power agency ownership interest in generating facilities.

(a) The Commission shall, upon the petition of an electric public utility and after hearing, approve an annual rider to the electric public utility's rates to recover the North Carolina retail portion of all reasonable and prudent costs incurred to acquire, operate, and maintain the proportional interest in electric generating facilities purchased from a joint agency established

under Chapter 159B of the General Statutes. For the purposes of this section, "acquisition costs" means the amount paid by an electric public utility on or before December 31, 2016, to acquire the generating facilities, including the amount paid above the net book value of the generating facilities. The Commission shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section.

(b) In determining the amount of the rider, the Commission shall:

(1) Allow an electric public utility to recover acquisition costs, as reasonable and prudent costs. For the benefit of the consumer, the acquisition costs shall be levelized over the useful life of the assets at the time of acquisition.

(2) Include financing costs equal to the weighted average cost of capital as authorized by the Commission in the electric public utility's most recent general rate case.

(3) Include an estimate of operating costs based on prior year's experience and the costs projected for the next 12-month period for any proportional capital investments in the acquired electric generating facilities.

(4) Include adjustments to reflect the North Carolina retail portion of financing and operating costs related to the electric public utility's other used and useful generating facilities owned at the time of the acquisition to properly account for updated jurisdictional allocation factors.

(5) Utilize the customer allocation methodology approved by the Commission in the electric public utility's most recent general rate case.

(c) The Commission shall require that an electric public utility file the following proposed annual adjustments to the rider:

(1) Any under-recovery or over-recovery resulting from the operation of the rider.

(2) Any changes necessary to recover costs as forecast for the next 12-month period.

(3) Any changes to cost of capital determined in any general rate proceeding occurring after the initial establishment of the rider, where the cost of capital applies to both the remaining acquisition costs and additional capital investment in the electric generating facilities.

(4) Any changes to the customer allocation methodology determined in any general rate proceeding occurring after the initial establishment of the rider.

(d) Any rider established under this section will expire after the end of the useful life of the acquired electric generating facilities at the time of acquisition, with any remaining unrecovered costs deferred until the electric public utility's next general rate proceeding under G.S. 62-133. (2015-3, s. 1.)

§ 62-133.15. (Expires July 1, 2026 – see note) Cost recovery for natural gas economic development infrastructure.

(a) Purpose. – The purpose of this section is to prescribe a methodology for cost recovery by a natural gas local distribution company that constructs natural gas economic development infrastructure to serve a project the Department of Commerce determines is an eligible project under G.S. 143B-437.021. The Commission shall adopt rules to implement this section.

(b) Eligibility. – Cost recovery under this section is limited to natural gas economic development infrastructure the Commission determines satisfies all of the following conditions:

(1) The project will be located in an area where adequate natural gas infrastructure for the eligible project is not economically feasible.

(2) Either the developer, prospective customer, or the occupant of the eligible project provides, prior to initiation of construction of the natural gas economic development infrastructure, a binding commitment in the form of a commercial contract or other form acceptable to the Commission to the natural gas local distribution company regarding service needed for a period of at least 10 years from the date the gas is made available.

(3) The projected margin revenues not recoverable under G.S. 62-133.4 from the eligible project will not be sufficient to cover the cost of the natural gas infrastructure associated with the project.

(c) Economic Feasibility. – The Commission shall permit a natural gas local distribution company to recover reasonable and prudent natural gas economic development infrastructure costs only to the extent necessary to make the construction of the infrastructure economically feasible, as determined by the Commission. In determining economic feasibility, the Commission shall employ the net present value method of analysis. Only natural gas economic development infrastructure with a negative net present value shall be determined to be economically infeasible.

(d) Costs Recoverable. – Eligible economic development infrastructure development costs are the reasonable and prudent costs determined by the Commission to be both directly related to the construction of natural gas infrastructure for an eligible project and economically infeasible. The costs may include any of the following:

(1) Planning costs.

(2) Development costs.

(3) Construction costs and an allowance for funds used during construction and a return on investment once the project is completed, calculated using the pretax overall rate of return approved by the Commission in the company's most recent general rate case.

(4) A revenue retention factor.

(5) Depreciation.

(6) Property taxes.

(e) Rate Adjustment Surcharge Mechanism. – The Commission shall permit recovery of eligible economic development infrastructure costs in a rate adjustment surcharge mechanism. The mechanism shall allow for recovery on an annual or semiannual basis, as determined by the Commission, subject to audit and reconciliation procedures. Any rate adjustment surcharge mechanism adopted under this section shall terminate upon the earlier of the full recovery of the costs allowed under subsection (d) of this section or the natural gas local distribution company's next general rate case in which the eligible infrastructure development costs shall be included in the natural gas distribution company's rate base. Nothing in this section precludes the natural gas local distribution company from recovering eligible economic development infrastructure costs in a general rate case.

(f) Limitations. – A natural gas local distribution company shall not invest more than twenty-five million dollars ($25,000,000) of eligible infrastructure development costs in any year. The aggregate amount of eligible infrastructure development costs recovered under rate adjustment surcharge mechanisms for all natural gas local distribution companies in the State cannot exceed seventy-five million dollars ($75,000,000). Cumulative rate adjustments allowed under a rate adjustment surcharge mechanism approved by the Commission under this section shall not exceed five percent (5%) of the total annual service margin revenues not recoverable under

G.S. 62-133.4 approved by the Commission in the natural gas local distribution company's last general rate case. (2016-118, s. 1; 2020-58, s. 7.3.)

§ 62-133.16. Performance-based regulation authorized.

(a) Definitions. – For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Cost causation principle" means establishment of a causal link between a specific customer class, how that class uses the electric system, and costs incurred by the electric public utility for the provision of electric service.

(2) "Decoupling rate-making mechanism" means a rate-making mechanism intended to break the link between an electric public utility's revenue and the level of consumption of electricity on a per customer basis by its residential customers.

(3) "Distributed energy resource" or "DER" means a device or measure that produces electricity or reduces electricity consumption and is connected to the electric distribution system, either on the customer's premises or on the electric public utility's primary distribution system. A DER may include any of the following: energy efficiency, distributed generation, demand response, microgrids, energy storage, energy management systems, and electric vehicles.

(4) "Earnings sharing mechanism" means an annual rate-making mechanism that shares surplus earnings between the electric public utility and customers over the period of time covered by a MYRP.

(5) "Multiyear rate plan" or "MYRP" means a rate-making mechanism under which the Commission sets base rates for a multiyear period that includes authorized periodic changes in base rates without the need for the electric public utility to file a subsequent general rate application pursuant to G.S. 62-133, along with an earnings sharing mechanism.

(6) "Performance incentive mechanism" or "PIM" means a rate-making mechanism that links electric public utility revenue or earnings to electric public utility performance in targeted areas consistent with policy goals, as that term is defined by this section, approved by the Commission, and includes specific performance metrics and targets against which electric public utility performance is measured.

(7) "Performance-based regulation" or "PBR" means an alternative rate-making approach that includes decoupling, one or more performance incentive mechanisms, and a multiyear rate plan, including an earnings sharing mechanism, or such other alternative regulatory mechanisms as may be proposed by an electric public utility.

(8) "Policy goal" means the expected or anticipated achievement of operational efficiency, cost-savings, or reliability of electric service that is greater than that which already is required by State or federal law or regulation, including standards the Commission has established by order prior to and independent of a PBR application, provided that, with respect to environmental standards, the Commission may not approve a policy goal that is more stringent than is established by (i) State law, (ii) federal law, (iii) the Environmental Management Commission pursuant to G.S. 143B-282, or (iv) the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

(9) "Rate year" means the year of the MYRP for which base rates are effective.

(10) "Tracking metric" means a methodology for tracking and quantitatively measuring and monitoring outcomes or electric public utility performance.

(b) Performance-Based Regulation Authorized. – In addition to the method for fixing base rates established under G.S. 62-133, the Commission is authorized to approve performance-based regulation upon application of an electric public utility pursuant to the process and requirements of this section, so long as the Commission allocates the electric public utility's total revenue requirement among customer classes based upon the cost causation principle, including the use of minimum system methodology by an electric public utility for the purpose of allocating distribution costs between customer classes, and interclass subsidization of ratepayers is minimized to the greatest extent practicable by the conclusion of the MYRP period. This section shall not be construed to require the Commission to use the minimum system methodology for the purpose of classifying costs within a customer class when setting a basic facilities charge.

(c) Application. – An electric public utility shall be permitted to submit a PBR application in a general rate case proceeding initiated pursuant to G.S. 62-133. A PBR application shall include a decoupling rate-making mechanism, one or more PIMs, and a MYRP, including both an earnings sharing mechanism and proposed revenue requirements and base rates for each of the years that a MYRP is in effect or a method for calculating the same. The PBR application may also include proposed tracking metrics with or without targets or benchmarks to measure electric public utility achievement. The following additional requirements apply to a PBR application:

(1) The following shall apply to a MYRP:

a. The base rates for the first rate year of a MYRP shall be fixed in the manner prescribed under G.S. 62-133, including actual changes in costs, revenues, or the cost of the electric public utility's property used and useful, or to be used and useful within a reasonable time after the test period, plus costs associated with a known and measurable set of capital investments, net of operating benefits, associated with a set of discrete and identifiable capital spending projects to be placed in service during the first rate year. Subsequent changes in base rates in the second and third rate years of the MYRP shall be based on projected incremental Commission-authorized capital investments that will be used and useful during the rate year and associated expenses, net of operating benefits, including operation and maintenance savings, and depreciation of rate base associated with the capital investments, that are incurred or realized during each rate year of the MYRP period; provided that the amount of increase in the second rate year under the MYRP shall not exceed four percent (4%) of the electric public utility's North Carolina retail jurisdictional revenue requirement that is used to fix rates during the first year of the MYRP pursuant to G.S. 62-133 excluding any revenue requirement for the capital spending projects to be placed in service during the first rate year. The amount of increase for the third rate year under the MYRP shall not exceed four percent (4%) of the electric public utility's North Carolina retail jurisdictional revenue requirement that is used to fix rates during the first year of the MYRP pursuant to G.S. 62-133, excluding any revenue requirement for the capital spending projects placed in service during the first rate year. The

revenue requirements associated with any single new generation plant placed in service during the MYRP for which the total plant in service balance exceeds five hundred million dollars ($500,000,000) shall not be included in a MYRP, except that combustion turbine generating units which are not part of a combined cycle generating unit may be included in the MYRP subject to the four percent (4%) limit identified in this subdivision. In the alternative, the utility may request and the Commission may grant, if it deems appropriate, permission to establish a regulatory asset and defer to such regulatory all or a portion of the asset incremental costs related to such electric generation investments to be considered for recovery in a future rate proceeding. In setting the electric public utility's authorized rate of return on equity for an MYRP period, the Commission shall consider any increased or decreased risk to either the electric public utility or its ratepayers that may result from having an approved MYRP.

b. In a proceeding authorizing a MYRP, the Commission shall establish a rider to refund amounts related to the earnings sharing mechanism, and to refund or collect amounts related to PIM rewards or penalties, and decoupling adjustments.

c. Within 60 days of the conclusion of each rate year, the Commission shall establish a proceeding to:

    1. Examine the earnings of the electric public utility during the rate year to determine if the earnings exceeded the authorized rate of return on equity determined by the Commission in the proceeding establishing the PBR. If the weather-normalized earnings exceed the authorized rate of return on equity plus 50 basis points, the excess earnings above the authorized rate of return on equity plus 50 basis points shall be refunded to customers in the rider established by the Commission. If the weather-normalized earnings fall below the authorized rate of return on equity, the electric public utility may file a rate case pursuant to G.S. 62-133. Any penalties or rewards from PIM incentives and any incentives related to demand-side management and energy efficiency measures pursuant to G.S. 62-133.9(f) will be excluded from the determination of any refund pursuant to earnings sharing mechanism.
    2. Evaluate the performance of the electric public utility with respect to Commission approved PIMs applicable in the rate year. Any financial rewards shall be collected from customers and any penalties refunded to customers, in each case, through the rider established by the Commission.
    3. Evaluate the decoupling rate-making mechanism, and refund or collect, as applicable, a corresponding amount from residential customers through the rider established by the Commission.

d. In addition to the annual review process set forth in sub-subdivision c. of this subdivision, the following shall apply:

1. For each quarter of a MYRP, the electric public utility shall report regarding the status of the approved MYRP projects in the manner directed by the Commission, including reporting on any project that is canceled, along with a detailed explanation regarding the reasons for such cancellation and the replacement capital spending project, if any. The Commission may, upon its own motion or petition by the Public Staff, open a proceeding to examine any potentially unreasonable or imprudent cancellations of approved capital spending projects and may initiate a proceeding to adjust base rates as necessary or direct further action with respect to such canceled project.
2. In any base rate case immediately following an authorized MYRP, the electric public utility shall be obligated to report on its execution of the approved MYRP projects with respect to any rate year completed as of the date of the filing of the PBR application, including by explaining any material differences between the approved MYRP projects and the actual executed projects.

(2) The proposed decoupling mechanism shall only be applied to residential customer classes. The Commission shall establish an annual revenue requirement per residential customer and an appropriate distribution of said revenue requirement per customer in each month of the year. The established monthly revenue requirements times the actual number of residential customers each month shall become the target revenue for the residential class. Each month, the electric public utility shall defer to a regulatory asset or liability account the difference between the actual revenue and the target revenue for the residential class. The changes in revenue requirements for the second and third rate years shall be allocated to the residential customer class and divided by the number of residential customers to determine the appropriate adjustment to the annual revenue requirement per residential customer that is used to establish the target revenues for the residential class in the second and third rate years of a MYRP. The electric public utility may exclude rate schedules or riders for electric vehicle charging, including EV charging during off-peak periods on time-of-use rates, from the decoupling mechanism to preserve the electric public utility's incentive to encourage electric vehicle adoption.

(3) The policy goal targeted by a PIM shall be clearly defined, measurable with a defined performance metric, and solely or primarily within the electric public utility's control.

(4) Any PIM shall be structured to ensure that, pursuant to subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection, any penalty shall be refunded to customers and any reward shall be collected from customers and shall be limited such that the total of all potential and actual PIM incentives or penalties does not exceed one percent (1%) of the electric public utility's total annual revenue requirement that is used to fix rates during the first year of the MYRP pursuant to G.S. 62-133, excluding any revenue requirement for the capital spending projects to be placed in service during the first rate year, where the PIM is approved. Any

incentives related to demand-side management and energy efficiency measures pursuant to G.S. 62-133.9(f) shall be excluded from the limits established in this section and shall continue to be recovered through the demand-side management and energy efficiency (DSM/EE) rider.

(5) Subject to the limitations set out in subdivision (4) of this subsection, any PIMs proposed by an electric public utility shall include one or more of the following:

a. Rewards based on the sharing of savings achieved by meeting or exceeding a specific policy goal.

b. Rewards or penalties based on differentiated authorized rates of return on common equity to encourage utility investments or operational changes to meet a specific policy goal, which shall not be greater than 25 basis points.

c. Fixed financial rewards to encourage achievement of specific policy goals, or fixed financial penalties for failure to achieve policy goals.

(d) Commission Action on Application. –

(1) The Commission shall approve a PBR application by an electric public utility only upon a finding that a proposed PBR would result in just and reasonable rates, is in the public interest, and is consistent with the criteria established in this section and rules adopted thereunder. In reviewing any such PBR application under this section, the Commission shall consider whether the PBR application:

a. Assures that no customer or class of customers is unreasonably harmed and that the rates are fair both to the electric public utility and to the customer.

b. Reasonably assures the continuation of safe and reliable electric service.

c. Will not unreasonably prejudice any class of electric customers and result in sudden substantial rate increases or "rate shock" to customers.

(2) In reviewing any such PBR application under this section, the Commission may consider whether the PBR application:

a. Encourages peak load reduction or efficient use of the system.

b. Encourages utility-scale clean energy and storage.

c. Encourages DERs.

d. Reduces low-income energy burdens.

e. Encourages energy efficiency.

f. Encourages carbon reductions.

g. Encourages beneficial electrification, including electric vehicles.

h. Supports equity in contracting.

i. Promotes resilience and security of the electric grid.

j. Maintains adequate levels of reliability, power quality, and customer service.

k. Promotes rate designs that yield peak load reduction or beneficial load-shaping.

(3) When an electric public utility files with the Commission an application for a general rate case pursuant to G.S. 62-133 and that application includes a PBR application, the Commission shall institute proceedings on the application as provided in this subdivision. The electric public utility shall not make any

changes in any rate or implement a PBR except upon 30 days' notice to the Commission, and the Commission may require the electric public utility to provide notice of the pending PBR application to the same extent as provided in G.S. 62-134(a) and may suspend the effect of the proposed base rates and PBR implementation pending investigation in the same manner as provided in G.S. 62-134(b), provided that, the Commission may suspend the implementation of the proposed base rates for no longer than 330 days. The electric public utility's application shall plainly state the changes in base rates and the time when the change in rates will go into effect and shall include schedules in the same manner required pursuant to G.S. 62-134(a). The Commission shall, upon reasonable notice, conduct a hearing concerning the lawfulness of the proposed base rates and the PBR application. After hearing, the Commission shall issue an order approving, modifying, or rejecting the electric public utility's PBR application. In the event that the Commission rejects a PBR application, the Commission shall nevertheless establish the electric public utility's base rates in accordance with G.S. 62-133 based on the PBR application. If the Commission rejects the PBR application, it shall provide an explanation of the deficiency and an opportunity for the electric public utility to refile, or for the electric public utility and the stakeholders to collaborate to cure the identified deficiency and refile.

(e) Commission Review. – At any time prior to expiration of a PBR plan period, the Commission, with good cause and upon its own motion or petition by the Public Staff, may examine the reasonableness of an electric public utility's rates under a plan, conduct periodic reviews with opportunities for public hearings and comments from interested parties, and initiate a proceeding to adjust base rates or PIMs as necessary. In addition, the approval of a PBR shall not be construed to limit the Commission's authority to grant additional deferrals between rate cases for extraordinary costs not otherwise recognized in rates.

(f) Plan Period. – Any PBR application approved pursuant to this section shall remain in effect for a plan period of not more than 36 months.

(g) Commission Authority Preserved. – Nothing in this section shall be construed to (i) limit or abrogate the existing rate-making authority of the Commission or (ii) invalidate or void any rates approved by the Commission prior to the effective date of this section. In all respects, the alternative rate-making mechanisms, designs, plans, or settlements shall operate independently, and be considered separately, from riders or other cost recovery mechanisms otherwise allowed by law, unless otherwise incorporated into such plan.

(h) Utility Reporting. – For purposes of measuring an electric public utility's earnings under a PBR application approved under this section, an electric public utility shall make an annual filing that sets forth the electric public utility's earned return on equity, the electric public utility's revenue requirement trued-up with the actual electric public utility revenue, the amount of revenue adjustment in terms of customer refund or surcharge, if applicable, and the adjustments reflecting rewards or penalties provided for in PIMs approved by the Commission.

(i) Commission Report. – No later than April 1 of each year, the Commission shall submit a report on the activities taken by the Commission to implement, and by electric public utilities to comply with, the requirements of this section to the Governor, the Environmental Review Commission, the Joint Legislative Commission on Energy Policy, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources, the chairs of the Senate

Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Natural, and Economic Resources, the chairs of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources, and the chairs of the House Committee on Energy and Public Utilities. The report shall include a summary of public comments received by the Commission. In developing the report, the Commission shall consult with the Department of Environmental Quality.

(j) Rulemaking. – The Commission shall adopt rules to implement the requirements of this section. Rules adopted shall include all of the following matters:

(1) The specific procedures and requirements that an electric public utility shall meet when requesting approval of a PBR application.

(2) The criteria for evaluating a PBR application.

(3) The parameters for a technical conference process to be conducted by the Commission prior to submission of any PBR application consisting of one public meeting at which the electric public utility presents information regarding projected transmission and distribution expenditures and interested parties are permitted to provide comment and feedback; provided, however, no cross-examination of parties shall be permitted. The technical conference process shall occur after the electric public utility submits its application but no later than 90 days after the filing of such application, and at least 30 days before the deadline established by the Commission for any interested parties to intervene.

(4) In the event the Commission rejects a PBR application, the process by which an electric public utility may address the Commission's reasons for rejection of a PBR application, which process may include collaboration between stakeholders and the electric public utility to cure any identified deficiency in an electric public utility's PBR application. (2021-165, s. 4(a); 2023-138, s. 1(c); 2025-78, s. 4.)

§ 62-133.20. Cleanfields renewable energy demonstration parks.

(a) Criteria for Designation. – A parcel or tract of land, or any combination of contiguous parcels or tracts of land, that meet all of the following criteria may be designated as a cleanfields renewable energy demonstration park:

(1) The park consists of at least 250 acres of contiguous property.

(2) All of the real property comprising the park is contiguous to a body of water.

(3) The property within the park is or may be subject to remediation under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 9601, et seq.), except for a site listed on the National Priorities List pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 9605.

(4) The park contains a manufacturing facility that is idle, underutilized, or curtailed and that at one time employed at least 250 people.

(5) The owners of the park plan to attract at least 250 new jobs to the site.

(6) The owners of the park have entered into a brownfields agreement with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources pursuant to G.S. 130A-310.32 and have provided satisfactory financial assurance for the brownfields agreement.

(7) The creation of the park is for the purpose of featuring clean-energy facilities, laboratories, and companies, thereby spurring economic growth by attracting renewable energy and alternative fuel industries.

(8) The development plan for the park must include at least three renewable energy or alternative fuel facilities.

(9) The development plan for the park must include a biomass renewable energy facility that utilizes refuse derived fuel, including yard waste, wood waste, and waste generated from construction and demolition, but not including wood directly derived from whole trees, as the primary source for generating energy. The refuse derived fuel shall undergo an enhanced recycling process before being utilized by the biomass renewable energy facility.

(10) The initial biomass renewable energy facility will not be a major source, as that term is defined in 40 C.F.R. § 70.2 (July 1, 2009 edition), for air quality purposes. The biomass renewable energy facility will remain in compliance with all applicable State and federal emissions requirements throughout its operating life.

(b) Certification. – The owner of a parcel or tract of land that seeks to establish a cleanfields renewable energy demonstration park shall submit to the Secretary of State an application for designation. The Secretary shall examine the application and may request any additional information from the owner of the parcel or tract of land or the Department of Environment and Natural Resources needed to verify that the project meets all of the criteria for designation. The Secretary may rely on certifications provided by the owner or the Department of Environment and Natural Resources that the criteria are met. If the Secretary determines that the project meets all of the criteria, the Secretary shall make and issue a certificate designating the parcel or tract of land as a cleanfields renewable energy demonstration park to the owner and shall file and record the application and certificate in an appropriate book of record. The parcel or tract of land shall be designated as a cleanfields renewable energy demonstration park on the date the certificate is filed and recorded.

(c) Renewable Energy Generation. – The definitions in G.S. 62-133.8 apply to this section. If the Utilities Commission determines that a biomass renewable energy facility located in the cleanfields renewable energy demonstration park is a new renewable energy facility, the Commission shall assign triple credit to any electric power or renewable energy certificates generated from renewable energy resources at the biomass renewable energy facility that are purchased by an electric power supplier for the purposes of compliance with G.S. 62-133.8. The additional credits assigned to the first 10 megawatts of biomass renewable energy facility generation capacity shall be eligible for use to meet the requirements of G.S. 62-133.8(f). The additional credits assigned to the first 10 megawatts of biomass renewable energy facility generation capacity shall first be used to satisfy the requirements of G.S. 62-133.8(f). Only when the requirements of G.S. 62-133.8(f) are met, shall the additional credits assigned to the first 10 megawatts of biomass renewable energy facility generation capacity be utilized to comply with G.S. 62-133.8(b) and (c). The triple credit shall apply only to the first 20 megawatts of biomass renewable energy facility generation capacity located in all cleanfields renewable energy demonstration parks in the State. (2010-195, ss. 2-4; 2011-279, s. 1.)

§ 62-134. Change of rates; notice; suspension and investigation.

(a) Unless the Commission otherwise orders, no public utility shall make any changes in any rate which has been duly established under this Chapter, except after 30 days' notice to the Commission, which notice shall plainly state the changes proposed to be made in the rates then in force, and the time when the changed rates will go into effect. The public utility shall also give such notice, which may include notice by publication, of the proposed changes to other interested persons as the Commission in its discretion may direct. All proposed changes shall be shown by filing new schedules, or shall be plainly indicated upon schedules filed and in force at the time and kept open to public inspection. The Commission, for good cause shown in writing, may allow changes in rates without requiring the 30 days' notice, under such conditions as it may prescribe. All such changes shall be immediately indicated upon its schedules by such public utility.

(b) Whenever there is filed with the Commission by any public utility any schedule stating a new or revised rate or rates, the Commission may, either upon complaint or upon its own initiative, upon reasonable notice, enter upon a hearing concerning the lawfulness of such rate or rates. Pending such hearing and the decision thereon, the Commission, upon filing with such schedule and delivering to the public utility affected thereby a statement in writing of its reasons therefor, may, at any time before they become effective, suspend the operation of such rate or rates, but not for a longer period than 270 days beyond the time when such rate or rates would otherwise go into effect. If the proceeding has not been concluded and an order made within the period of suspension, the proposed change of rate shall go into effect at the end of such period. After hearing, whether completed before or after the rate goes into effect, the Commission may make such order with respect thereto as would be proper in a proceeding instituted after it had become effective.

(c) At any hearing involving a rate changed or sought to be changed by the public utility, the burden of proof shall be upon the public utility to show that the changed rate is just and reasonable.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of this Article, any public utility engaged solely in distributing electricity to retail customers, which electricity has been purchased at wholesale rates from another public utility, an electric membership corporation or a municipality, may in its discretion, and without the necessity of public hearings as in this section is otherwise provided, elect to adopt the same retail rates to customers charged by the public utility, electric membership corporation or municipality from whom the wholesale power is purchased for the same service, unless the North Carolina Utility Commission finds upon a hearing, either on its own initiative or upon complaint, that the rate of return earned by such utility upon the basis of such rates is unjust and unreasonable. In such a proceeding the burden of proof shall be upon the electrical distribution company.

(e) Repealed by Session Laws 1981 (Regular Session, 1982), c. 1197, s. 2.

(f) The Commission may adopt rules prescribing the information and exhibits required to be filed with any applications, or tariff for an increase in utility rates, including but not limited to all of the evidence or proof through the end of the test period which the utility will rely on at any hearing on such increase, and the Commission may suspend such increase until such data, information or exhibits are filed, in addition to the time provided for suspension of such increase in other provisions of this Chapter.

(g) The provisions of this section shall not be applicable to bus companies or to their rates, fares or tariffs.

(h) Notwithstanding the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) of this section, the Commission may, in lieu of fixing specific rates or tariffs for competitive services offered by a public utility defined in G.S. 62-3(23)a.6., adopt practices and procedures to permit pricing

flexibility, detariffing services, or both. In exercising its authority to permit pricing flexibility, detariffing of services, or both, the Commission shall first determine that the service is competitive. After a determination that the service is competitive, the Commission shall consider the following in deciding whether to permit pricing flexibility, detariffing of services, or both:

(1) The extent to which competing telecommunications services are available from alternative providers in the relevant geographic or service market;
(2) The market share, growth in market share, ease of entry, and affiliations of alternative providers;
(3) The size and number of alternative providers and the ability of such alternative providers to make functionally equivalent or substitute services readily available at competitive rates and on competitive terms and conditions;
(4) Whether the exercise of Commission authority produces tangible benefits to consumers that exceed those available by reliance on market forces;
(5) Whether the exercise of Commission authority inhibits the public utility from competing with unregulated providers of functionally equivalent telecommunications services;
(6) Whether the existence of competition tends to prevent abuses, unjust discrimination or excessive charges for the service or facility offered;
(7) Whether the public utility would gain an unfair advantage in its competitive activities; and
(8) Any other relevant factors protecting the public interest.

(i) On motion of any interested party and for good cause shown, the Commission shall hold hearings prior to adopting any pricing flexibility or detariffing of services permitted under this section. The Commission may also revoke a determination made under this section when the Commission determines, after notice and opportunity to be heard, that the public interest requires that the rates and charges for the service be more fully regulated.

(j) Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 62-140, the Commission may permit public utilities subject to subsection (h) of this section to offer competitive services to business customers upon agreement between the public utility and the customer provided the services are compensatory and cover the costs of providing the service. (1933, c. 307, s. 7; 1939, c. 365, s. 3; 1941, c. 97; 1945, c. 725; 1947, c. 1008, s. 24; 1949, c. 1132, s. 22; 1959, c. 422; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1971, c. 551; 1973, c. 1444; 1975, c. 243, s. 8; c. 510, c. 867, s. 7; 1981 (Reg. Sess., 1982), c. 1197, s. 2; 1985, c. 676, s. 15(3); 1989, c. 112, s. 3.)

§ 62-135. Temporary rates under bond.

(a) Notwithstanding an order of suspension of an increase in rates, any public utility except a common carrier may, subject to the provisions of subsections (b), (c) and (d) hereof, put such suspended rate or rates into effect upon the expiration of six months after the date when such rate or rates would have become effective, if not so suspended, by notifying the Commission and its consumers of its action in making such increase not less than 10 days prior to the day when it shall be placed in effect; provided, however, that utilities engaged in the distribution of utility commodities bought at wholesale by the utility for distribution to consumers may put such suspended rate or rates, to the extent occasioned by changes in the wholesale rate of such utility commodity, into effect at the expiration of 30 days after the date when such rate or rates would become effective if not so suspended; provided that no rate or rates shall be left in effect longer

than one year unless the Commission shall have rendered its decision upon the reasonableness thereof within such period. This section to become effective July 1, 1963.

(b) No rate or rates placed in effect pursuant to this section shall result in an increase of more than twenty percent (20%) on any single rate classification of the public utility.

(c) No rate or rates shall be placed in effect pursuant to this section until the public utility has filed with the Commission a bond in a reasonable amount approved by the Commission, with sureties approved by the Commission, or an undertaking approved by the Commission, conditioned upon the refund in a manner to be prescribed by order of the Commission, to the persons entitled thereto of the amount of the excess plus interest from the date that such rates were put into effect, if the rate or rates so put into effect are finally determined to be excessive. The amount of said interest shall be determined pursuant to G.S. 62-130(e).

(d) If the rate or rates so put into effect are finally determined to be excessive, the public utility shall make refund of the excess plus interest to its customers within 30 days after such final determination, and the Commission shall set forth in its final order the terms and conditions for such refund. If such refund is not paid in accordance with such order, any persons entitled to such refund may sue therefor, either jointly or severally, and be entitled to recover, in addition to the amount of the refund, all court costs and reasonable attorney fees for the plaintiff, to be fixed by the court. (1933, c. 307, s. 7; 1959, c. 422; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1981, c. 461, s. 2.)

§ 62-136. Investigation of existing rates; changing unreasonable rates; certain refunds to be distributed to customers.

(a) Whenever the Commission, after a hearing had after reasonable notice upon its own motion or upon complaint of anyone directly interested, finds that the existing rates in effect and collected by any public utility are unjust, unreasonable, insufficient or discriminatory, or in violation of any provision of law, the Commission shall determine the just, reasonable, and sufficient and nondiscriminatory rates to be thereafter observed and in force, and shall fix the same by order.

(b) All municipalities in the State are deemed to be directly interested in the rates and service of public utilities operating in such municipalities, and may institute or participate in proceedings before the Commission involving such rates or service. Any municipality may institute proceedings before the Commission to eliminate unfair and unreasonable discrimination in rates or service by any public utility between such complainant or its inhabitants and any other municipality or its inhabitants, and the Commission shall, upon complaint, after hearing afforded to the public utility affected and to all municipalities affected, have authority to remove such discrimination.

(c) If any refund is made to a distributing company operating as a public utility in North Carolina of charges paid to the company from which the distributing company obtains the energy, service or commodity distributed, the Commission may, in cases where the charges have been included in rates paid by the customers of the distributing company, require said distributing company to distribute said refund plus interest among the distributing company's customers in a manner prescribed by the Commission. The amount of said interest shall be determined pursuant to G.S. 62-130(e). (Ex. Sess. 1913, c. 20, s. 7; C.S., s. 1083; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; c. 307, s. 8; 1937, c. 401; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1981, c. 460, s. 1.)

§ 62-137. Scope of rate case.

In setting a hearing on rates upon its own motion, upon complaint, or upon application of a public utility, the Commission shall declare the scope of the hearing by determining whether it is to be a general rate case, under G.S. 62-133, or whether it is to be a case confined to the reasonableness of a specific single rate, a small part of the rate structure, or some classification of users involving questions which do not require a determination of the entire rate structure and overall rate of return. The procedures established in this section shall not be required when pricing alternatives permitted under G.S. 62-134(h) and (j) are adopted. (1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1989, c. 112, s. 4.)

§ 62-138. Utilities to file rates, service regulations and service contracts with Commission; publication; certain telephone service prohibited.

(a) Under such rules as the Commission may prescribe, every public utility, except as permitted under G.S. 62-134(h) and (j):

(1) Shall file with the Commission all schedules of rates, service regulations and forms of service contracts, used or to be used within the jurisdiction of the Commission; and

(2) Shall keep copies of such schedules, service regulations and contracts open to public inspection. Except, if there is a sufficient likelihood that a public utility defined in G.S. 62-3(23)a.6. may suffer a competitive disadvantage if the rates for a specific competitive service are disclosed, the Commission may waive the public disclosure of the rates. The Commission may revoke the disclosure waiver upon a showing that the competitive disadvantage no longer exists.

(b) Every common carrier of passengers shall file with the Commission, print, and keep open for public inspection schedules showing all rates for the transportation of passengers in intrastate commerce and all services in connection therewith between points on its own routes and between points on its own routes and points on the routes of other such common carriers, and if it establishes joint rates with other common carriers, it shall include in its schedules so filed such joint rates.

(c) Every irregular route common carrier of household goods shall file with the Commission, print, and keep open for public inspection schedules showing all rates for the transportation of household goods in intrastate commerce between points within the area of its authorized operation, and if it establishes joint rates with other common carriers, it shall include in its schedules so filed such joint rates between points within the area of its own authorized operation and points on the line or route of such other common carriers.

(c1) Any person who, though exempt from Commission regulation under Public Law 103-305, agrees to joint line rates or routes as authorized by Public Law 103-305 may file with the Commission, print, and keep open for public inspection schedules showing all such joint rates for the transportation of property in intrastate commerce, and all connected services, between all points the person serves.

(d) The schedules required by this section shall be published, filed, and posted in such form and manner and shall contain such information as the Commission may prescribe; and the Commission is authorized to reject any schedule filed with it which is not in compliance with this section. Any schedule so rejected by the Commission shall be void and its use shall be unlawful.

(e) No public utility, unless otherwise provided by this Chapter, shall engage in service to the public unless its rates for such service have been filed and published in accordance with the provisions of this section.

(f) Under such rules as the Commission may prescribe, every electric membership corporation operating within this State shall file with the Commission, for information purposes, all rates, schedules of rates, charges, service regulations, and forms of service contracts, used or to be used within the State, and shall keep copies of such schedules, rates, charges, service regulations, and contracts open to public inspection.

(g) No public utility may offer or maintain telephone service to any subscriber to such service who has in use or proposes to place in use equipment which will enable said subscriber to observe or monitor telephone calls directed to or placed by said subscriber unless said subscriber shall agree that such equipment shall be used in conformity with the standards for the use of such equipment adopted by the Commission. (1899, c. 164, s. 7; Rev., s. 1109; 1907, c. 217, s. 5; C.S., s. 1074; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; c. 307, s. 4; 1941, c. 97; 1947, c. 1008, s. 25; 1949, c. 1132, s. 23; 1959, c. 209; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1965, c. 287, s. 7; 1977, c. 799; 1989, c. 112, s. 5; 1995, c. 523, s. 6.)

§ 62-139. Rates varying from schedule prohibited; refunding overcharge; penalty.

(a) No public utility shall directly or indirectly, by any device whatsoever, charge, demand, collect or receive from any person a greater or less compensation for any service rendered or to be rendered by such public utility than that prescribed by the Commission, nor shall any person receive or accept any service from a public utility for a compensation greater or less than that prescribed by the Commission.

(b) Any public utility in the State which shall willfully charge a rate for any public utility service in excess of that prescribed by the Commission, and which shall omit to refund the same within 30 days after written notice and demand of the person overcharged, unless relieved by the Commission for good cause shown, shall be liable to him for double the amount of such overcharge, plus a penalty of ten dollars ($10.00) per day for each day's delay after 30 days from such notice or date of denial or relief by the Commission, whichever is later. Such overcharge and penalty shall be recoverable in any court of competent jurisdiction. (1903, c. 590, ss. 1, 2; Rev., ss. 2642, 2643, 2644; Ex. Sess. 1913, c. 20, ss. 5, 12; C.S., ss. 1082, 1086, 3514; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; c. 307, s. 5; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1989, c. 112, s. 6.)

§ 62-140. Discrimination prohibited.

(a) No public utility shall, as to rates or services, make or grant any unreasonable preference or advantage to any person or subject any person to any unreasonable prejudice or disadvantage. No public utility shall establish or maintain any unreasonable difference as to rates or services either as between localities or as between classes of service. The Commission may determine any questions of fact arising under this section; provided that it shall not be an unreasonable preference or advantage or constitute discrimination against any person, firm or corporation or general rate payer for telephone utilities to contract with motels, hotels and hospitals to pay reasonable commissions in connection with the handling of intrastate toll calls charged to a guest or patient and collected by the motel, hotel or hospital; provided further, that payment of such commissions shall be in accordance with uniform tariffs which shall be subject to the approval of the Commission. Provided further, that it shall not be considered an unreasonable preference or advantage for the Commission to order, if it finds the public interest so requires, a reduction in local telephone rates for low-income residential consumers meeting a means test established by the Commission in order to match any reduction in the interstate subscriber line charge authorized by the Federal Communications Commission. If the State repeals any State funding mechanism for a reduction in the local telephone rates for low-income residential consumers, the Commission shall

take appropriate action to eliminate any requirement for the reduced rate funded by the repealed State funding mechanism. For the purposes of this section, a State funding mechanism for a reduction in the local telephone rates includes a tax credit allowed for the public utility to recover the reduction in rates.

Nothing in this section prohibits the Commission from establishing different rates for natural gas service to counties that are substantially unserved, to the extent that those rates reflect the cost of providing service to the unserved counties and upon a finding by the Commission that natural gas service would not otherwise become available to the counties.

(b) The Commission shall make reasonable and just rules and regulations:

(1) To prevent discrimination in the rates or services of public utilities.

(2) To prevent the giving, paying or receiving of any rebate or bonus, directly or indirectly, or misleading or deceiving the public in any manner as to rates charged for the services of public utilities.

(c) No public utility shall offer or pay any compensation or consideration or furnish any equipment to secure the installation or adoption of the use of such utility service except upon filing of a schedule of such compensation or consideration or equipment to be furnished and approved thereof by the Commission, and offering such compensation, consideration or equipment to all persons within the same classification using or applying for such public utility service; provided, in considering the reasonableness of any such schedule filed by a public utility the Commission shall consider, among other things, evidence of consideration or compensation paid by any competitor, regulated or nonregulated, of the public utility to secure the installation or adoption of the use of such competitor's service. For the purpose of this subsection, "public utility" shall include any electric membership corporation operating within this State, and the terms "utility service" and "public utility service" shall include the service rendered by any such electric membership corporation. (1899, c. 164, s. 2, subsecs. 3, 5; Rev., s. 1095; 1913, c. 127, s. 6; C.S., s. 1054; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; c. 307, s. 6; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1965, c. 287, s. 8; 1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1146; 1985, c. 694, s. 1; 1997-426, s. 1; 2013-363, s. 11.1; 2021-23, s. 18.)

§ 62-141. Long and short hauls.

(a) Except when expressly permitted by the Commission, it shall be unlawful for any common carrier to charge or receive any greater compensation in the aggregate for the transportation of like kind of household goods under substantially similar circumstances and conditions for a shorter than for a longer distance over the same line or route in the same direction, the shorter being included within the longer distance; but this shall not be construed as authorizing any common carrier within the terms of this Chapter to charge and receive as great compensation for a shorter as for a longer distance.

(b) Upon application to the Commission, common carriers may in special cases be authorized to charge less for longer than for shorter distances for the transportation of household goods; and the Commission may from time to time prescribe the extent to which such designated common carrier may be relieved from the operation of this section.

(c) The provisions of this section shall not be applicable to bus companies or to their rates, charges or tariffs. (1899, c. 164, s. 14; Rev., s. 1107; Ex. Sess. 1913, c. 20, s. 9; 1915, c. 17, s. 1; C.S., s. 1072; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1985, c. 676, s. 15(4); 1995, c. 523, s. 7.)

§ 62-142. Contracts as to rates.

All contracts and agreements between public utilities as to rates shall be submitted to the Commission for inspection that it may be seen whether or not they are a violation of law or the rules and regulations of the Commission, and all arrangements and agreements whatever as to the division of earnings of any kind by competing public utilities shall be submitted to the Commission for inspection and approval insofar as they affect the rules and regulations made by the Commission to secure to all persons doing business with such utilities just and reasonable rates. The Commission may make such rules and regulations, as to such contracts and agreements as the public interest may require. (1899, c. 164, s. 6; Rev., s. 1108; C.S., s. 1073; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-143. Schedule of rates to be evidence.

The schedule of rates fixed by statute or under this Article, in suits brought against any public utility involving the rates of a public utility or unjust discrimination in relation thereto, shall be taken in all courts as prima facie evidence that the rates therein fixed are just and reasonable. Any such schedule when certified by a clerk of the Commission as a true copy of a schedule on file with the Commission shall be received in all courts as prima facie evidence of such schedule without further proof, and, if the clerk certifies that said schedule has been approved by the Commission, as prima facie evidence of such approval. (1899, c. 164, s. 7; Rev., s. 1112; C.S., s. 1077; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-144. Free transportation.

(a) All common carriers under the supervision of the Commission shall furnish free transportation to the members of the Commission, and, upon written authority of the Commission, such carriers shall also furnish free transportation to such persons as the Commission may designate in its employ or in the employ of the Department of Motor Vehicles for the inspection of equipment and supervision of safe operating conditions and of traffic upon the highways of the State.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (a), no common carrier shall, directly or indirectly, issue, give, tender, or honor any free fares except to its bona fide officers, agents, commission agents, employees and retired employees, and members of their immediate families: Provided, that common carriers under this Article may exchange free transportation within the limits of this section and may accept as a passenger a totally blind person accompanied by a guide at the usual and ordinary fare charged to one person under such reasonable regulations as may have been established by the carrier and approved by the Commission.

(c) Any person except those permitted by law accepting free transportation shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(d) Nothing in this section shall prohibit the carriage, storage or handling of household goods free or at reduced rates for the United States, State or municipal governments, or for charitable or educational purposes, or the use of passes for journeys wholly within this State which have been or may be issued for interstate journeys under the authority of the United States Interstate Commerce Commission. (1899, c. 164, s. 22; c. 642; 1901, c. 652; c. 679, s. 2; 1905, c. 312; Rev., s. 1105; Ex. Sess. 1908, c. 144, s. 4; 1911, cc. 49, 148; 1913, c. 100; 1915, c. 215; 1917, cc. 56, 160; C.S., ss. 1069, 1070, 3492; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1949, c. 1132, s. 27; 1953, c. 1279; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 477; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1995, c. 523, s. 8.)

§ 62-145. Rates between points connected by more than one route.

When there is more than one route between given points in North Carolina, and freight is routed or directed by the shipper or consignee to be transported over a shorter route, and it is in fact shipped by a longer route between such points, the rate fixed by law or by the Commission for the shorter route shall be the maximum rate which may be charged, and it shall be unlawful to charge more for transporting such freight over the longer route than the lawful charge for the shorter route. (Ex. Sess. 1913, c. 20, s. 11; C.S., s. 1085; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-146. Rates and service of motor common carriers of property.

(a) It shall be the duty of every common carrier of household goods by motor vehicle to provide safe and adequate service, equipment, and facilities for transportation in intrastate commerce and to establish, observe and enforce just and reasonable regulations and practices relating thereto, and, in the case of household goods carriers, relating to the manner and method of presenting, marking, packing and delivering property for transportation in intrastate commerce.

(b) Except under special conditions and for good cause shown, a common carrier by motor vehicle authorized to transport general commodities over regular routes shall establish reasonable through routes and joint rates, charges, and classifications with other such common carriers by motor vehicle; and such common carrier may establish, with the prior approval of the Commission, such routes, joint rates, charges and classifications with any irregular route common carrier by motor vehicle, or any common carrier by rail, express, or water.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 676, s. 15.

(d) In case of joint rates between common carriers of property, it shall be the duty of the carriers parties thereto to establish just and reasonable regulations and practices in connection therewith, and just, reasonable, and equitable divisions thereof as between the carriers participating therein, which shall not unduly prefer or prejudice any of such participating carriers. Upon investigation and for good cause, the Commission may, in its discretion, prohibit the establishment of joint rates or service.

(e) Any person may make complaint in writing to the Commission that any rate, classification, rule, regulations, or practice in effect or proposed to be put into effect, is or will be in violation of this Article. Whenever, after hearing, upon complaint or in an investigation or its own initiative, the Commission shall be of the opinion that any individual or joint rate demanded, charged, or collected by any common carrier or carriers by motor vehicle, or by any such common carrier or carriers in conjunction with any other common carrier or carriers, for transportation of household goods in intrastate commerce, or any classification, rule, regulation, or practice whatsoever of such carrier or carriers affecting such rate or the value of the service thereunder, is or will be unjust or unreasonable or unjustly discriminatory or unduly preferential or unduly prejudicial, it shall determine and prescribe the lawful rate or the minimum or maximum, or the minimum and maximum rate thereafter to be observed, or the lawful classification, rule, regulation, or practice thereafter to be made effective.

(f) Whenever, after hearing upon complaint or upon its own initiative, the Commission is of the opinion that the divisions of joint rates applicable to the transportation of household goods in intrastate commerce between a common carrier by motor vehicle and another carrier are or will be unjust, unreasonable, inequitable, or unduly preferential or prejudicial as between the carriers parties thereto (whether agreed upon by such carriers or otherwise established), the Commission shall by order prescribe the just, reasonable, and equitable division thereof to be received by the several carriers; and in cases where the joint rate or charge was established pursuant to a finding or order of the Commission and the divisions thereof are found by it to have been unjust,

unreasonable, or inequitable or unduly preferential or prejudicial, the Commission may also by order determine what would have been the just, reasonable, and equitable divisions thereof to be received by the several carriers and require adjustment to be made in accordance therewith. The order of the Commission may require the adjustment of divisions between the carriers in accordance with the order from the date of filing the complaint or entry of order of investigation or such other dates subsequent thereto as the Commission finds justified, and in the case of joint rates prescribed by the Commission, the order as to divisions may be made effective as a part of the original order.

(g) In any proceeding to determine the justness or reasonableness of any rate of any common carrier of household goods by motor vehicle, there shall not be taken into consideration or allowed as evidence any elements of value of the property of such carrier, good will, earning power, or the certificate under which such carrier is operating, and such rates shall be fixed and approved, subject to the provisions of subsection (h) hereof, on the basis of the operating ratios of such carriers, being the ratio of their operating expenses to their operating revenues, at a ratio to be determined by the Commission; and in applying for and receiving a certificate under this Chapter any such carrier shall be deemed to have agreed to the provisions of this paragraph, on its own behalf and on behalf of every transferee of such certificate or of any part thereof.

(h) In the exercise of its power to prescribe just and reasonable rates and charges for the transportation of household goods in intrastate commerce by common carriers by motor vehicle, and classifications, regulations, and practices relating thereto, the Commission shall give due consideration, among other factors, to the inherent advantages of transportation by such carriers; to the effect of rates upon movement of traffic by the carrier or carriers for which rates are prescribed; to the need in the public interest of adequate and efficient transportation service by such carriers at the lowest cost consistent with the furnishing of such service; and to the need of revenues sufficient to enable such carriers under honest, economical, and efficient management to provide such service.

(i) Nothing in this section shall be held to extinguish any remedy or right of action not inconsistent herewith. This section shall be in addition to other provisions of this Chapter which relate to public utilities generally, except that in cases of conflict between such other provisions and this section, this section shall prevail for motor carriers. (1947, c. 1008, s. 23; 1949, c. 1132, s. 22; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1985, c. 676, s. 15(5); 1995, c. 523, s. 9.)

§ 62-146.1. Rates and service of bus companies.

(a) It shall be the duty of every bus company to provide safe and adequate service, equipment and facilities for transportation of passengers in intrastate commerce and to establish, observe and enforce just and reasonable regulations and practices.

(b) The Commission by its rules and regulations may require the interlining of passengers by bus companies operating in intrastate commerce in this State where the point of destination of the passenger is not served by the originating carrier. In these cases it shall be the duty of every bus company to establish reasonable through rates with other bus companies; to establish, observe and enforce just and reasonable individual and joint rates, fares and charges and just and reasonable regulations and practices relating to the charges and to the issuance, form and substance of tickets and the carrying of personal and excess baggage.

(c) In case of joint rates between bus companies, it shall be the duty of the bus companies to establish just and reasonable regulations and practices in connection with the joint rates and just,

reasonable and equitable divisions between the participating companies, which shall not unduly prefer or prejudice any of the participating companies.

(d) A bus company providing fixed route service may file with the Commission a petition for new or revised rates, fares or charges. Unless the Commission orders otherwise, no bus company shall make any changes in its rates, fares and charges, which have been established under this Chapter, except after 30 days' notice to the Commission. The notice shall plainly state the changes proposed to be made in the rates then in force, and the time when the changed rates will go into effect. The bus company shall also give notice, which may include notice by publication, of the proposed changes to other interested persons that the Commission may direct. All proposed changes shall be shown by filing new schedules, or shall be plainly indicated upon schedules filed with the Commission and in force at the time and kept open to public inspection by the bus company. The Commission, for good cause shown in writing, may allow changes in rates without requiring the 30 days' notice, under any conditions as it prescribes. All changes shall be immediately indicated by the bus company on its schedules.

(e) Whenever there is filed with the Commission by any bus company any schedule stating a new or revised rate, fare or charge, the Commission may, either upon complaint or upon its own initiative, after reasonable notice, hold a hearing to determine if the proposed new or revised rates, fares or charges are just and reasonable. Pending the hearing and a decision, the Commission, upon filing with the proposed schedule and delivering to the affected bus company a statement in writing of its reasons, may, at any time before they become effective, suspend the operation of the rate or rates, for a period not to exceed 120 days from the filing of the petition. If the proceeding has not been concluded and a final order made within the period of suspension, the proposed change of rate shall go into effect at the end of the 120-day period.

(f) In any proceeding to determine the justness or reasonableness of any rates, fares or charges of a bus company, the Commission shall authorize revenue levels that are adequate under honest, economical, and efficient management to cover total operating expenses, including the operation of leased equipment and depreciation, plus a reasonable profit. The standards and procedures adopted by the Commission under this subsection shall allow the bus company to achieve revenue levels that will provide a flow of net income, plus depreciation, adequate to support prudent capital outlays, assure the repayment of a reasonable level of debt, permit the raising of needed equity capital, attract and retain capital and amounts adequate to provide a sound passenger bus transportation system in this State, and take into account reasonable estimated or foreseeable future costs.

(g) Notwithstanding any provision of this section, the Commission may not investigate, suspend, review or revoke the operation of proposed new or revised rates, fares or charges if the proposed new or revised rates, fares or charges do not exceed the standard rates, fares or charges then in effect by the petitioning bus company for comparable interstate transportation of passengers.

(h) Any person may make complaint in writing to the Commission that any rate, fare, charge, classification, rule, regulation, or practice in effect, or proposed to be put in effect, is or will be in violation of this Chapter. Whenever, after holding a hearing, upon complaint, in an investigation, or upon its own initiative, the Commission finds that any individual or joint rate demanded, charged, or collected by any bus company for transportation of passengers in intrastate commerce, or any classification, rule, regulation or practice of the bus company affecting the rate or the value of the service provided, is or will be unjust or unreasonable or unjustly discriminatory or unduly preferential or unduly prejudicial or constitute an unfair or destructive competitive

practice, or otherwise contravenes the policies declared in this Chapter, or is in contravention of any provision of this Chapter, the Commission shall determine and prescribe the lawful rate, or the lawful classification, rule, regulation or practice to be put into effect.

(i) For purposes of this Chapter, rates, fares and charges established pursuant to this section shall be deemed fair, just and reasonable.

(j) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, the rates, fares and charges established for charter service by a bus company authorized and engaged in charter operations in this State shall be exempt from regulation by the Commission. A bus company authorized and engaged in charter operations shall file with the Commission a current statement of its rates, fares and charges as required by the Commission. (1985, c. 676, s. 15(6).)

§ 62-147: Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 523, s. 10.

§ 62-148. Rates on leased or controlled utility.

If any public utility operating in the State other than a motor carrier is owned, controlled or operated by lease or other agreement by any other public utility doing business in the State, its rates may, in the discretion of the Commission, be determined for such public utility by the rates prescribed for the public utility which owns, controls or operates it. (Ex. Sess. 1908, c. 144, s. 2; C.S., s. 3490; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-149. Unused tickets to be redeemed.

Whenever any ticket is sold and is not wholly used by the purchaser, it shall be the duty of the carrier selling such ticket to redeem it or the unused portion thereof at the price paid for it, or in such manner and at such price as the Commission shall prescribe by regulation. (1891, c. 290; 1893, c. 249; 1895, c. 83, ss. 2, 3; 1897, c. 418; Rev., s. 2627; C.S., s. 3503; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-150. Ticket may be refused intoxicated person; penalty for prohibited entry.

The ticket agent of any common carrier of passengers shall at all times have power to refuse to sell a ticket to any person applying for the same who may at the time be intoxicated. The driver or other person in charge of any conveyance for the use of the traveling public shall at all times have power to prevent any intoxicated person from entering such conveyance. If any intoxicated person, after being forbidden by the driver or other person having charge of any such conveyance for the use of the traveling public, shall enter such conveyance, he shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1885, c. 358, ss. 1, 2, 3; Rev., ss. 2625, 2626, 3757; C.S., s. 3504; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 478; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1998-128, s. 5.)

§ 62-151. Passenger refusing to pay fare or violating rules may be ejected.

If any passenger shall refuse to pay his fare, or be or become intoxicated, or violate the rules of a common carrier, it shall be lawful for the driver of the bus or other conveyance, and servants of the carrier, on stopping the conveyance, to put him and his baggage out of the conveyance, using no unnecessary force. (1871-2, c. 138, s. 34; Code, s. 1962; Rev., s. 2629; C.S., s. 3507; 1949, c. 1132, s. 30; 1953, c. 1140, s. 4; 1957, c. 1152, s. 16; 1961, c. 472, s. 11; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1998-128, s. 6.)

§ 62-152: Repealed by Session Laws 1998-128, s. 13.

§ 62-152.1. Uniform rates; joint rate agreements among carriers.

(a) Definitions. – As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires, the term:

(1) "Carrier" means any common carrier as defined in G.S. 62-3(6).

(2) For purposes of this section, carriers by motor vehicles are carriers of the same class, carriers by pipeline are carriers of the same class, carriers by water are carriers of the same class, carriers by air are carriers of the same class, and freight forwarders are carriers of the same class.

(3) The term "antitrust laws" means the provisions of Chapter 75 of the General Statutes (N.C.G.S. 75-1, et seq.), relating to combinations in restraint of trade.

(b) For the purpose of achieving a stable rate structure it shall be the policy of this State to fix uniform rates for the same or similar services by carriers of the same class. In order to realize and effectuate this policy and regulatory goal any carrier subject to regulation by this Commission and party to an agreement between or among two or more carriers relating to rates, fares, classifications, divisions, allowances or charges (including charges between carriers and compensation paid or received for the use of facilities and equipment), or rules and regulations pertaining thereto, or procedures for the joint consideration, initiation or establishment thereof, may, under such rules and regulations as the Commission may prescribe, apply to the Commission for approval of the agreement, and the Commission shall by order approve any such agreement (if approval thereof is not prohibited by subsection (d) or (e) of this section) if it finds that, by reason of furtherance of the transportation policy and goal declared in this section and in G.S. 62-2 or G.S. 62-259 as may be pertinent, the relief provided in subsection (h) shall apply with respect to the making and carrying out of such agreement; otherwise, the application shall be denied. The approval of the Commission shall be granted only upon such terms and conditions as the Commission may prescribe as necessary to enable it to grant its approval in accordance with the standard above set forth in this subsection.

(c) Each conference, bureau, committee, or other organization established or continued pursuant to any agreement approved by the Commission under this section shall maintain such accounts, records, files and memoranda and shall submit to the Commission such information and reports as may be prescribed by the Commission, and all the accounts, records, files and memoranda shall be subject to inspection by the Commission or its duly authorized representatives.

(d) The Commission shall not approve under this section any agreement between or among carriers of different classes unless it finds that the agreement is of the character described in subsection (b) of this section and is limited to matters relating to transportation under joint rates or over through routes.

(e) The Commission shall not approve under this section any agreement which establishes a procedure for the determination of any matter through joint consideration unless it finds that under the agreement there is accorded to each party the free and unrestrained right to take independent action after any determination arrived at through such procedure.

(f) The Commission is authorized, upon complaint or upon its own initiative without complaint, to investigate and determine whether any agreement previously approved by it under this section, or terms and conditions upon which the approval was granted is not or are not in conformity with the standards set forth in subsection (b) of this section, or whether any such terms and conditions are not necessary for the purposes of conformity with such standards, and, after such investigation, the Commission shall by order terminate or modify its approval of such agreement if it finds such action necessary to insure conformity with such standards, and shall

modify the terms and conditions upon which such approval was granted to the extent it finds necessary to insure conformity with such standards or to the extent to which it finds such terms and conditions not necessary to insure such conformity. The effective date of any order terminating or modifying approval, or modifying terms and conditions, shall be postponed for such period as the Commission determines to be reasonably necessary to avoid undue hardships.

(g) No order shall be entered under this section except after interested parties have been afforded reasonable notice and opportunity for hearing.

(h) Parties to any agreement approved by the Commission under this section and other parties are, if the approval of such agreement is not prohibited by subsection (d) or (e) of this section, hereby relieved from the operation of the antitrust laws with respect to the making of such agreement, and with respect to the carrying out of such agreement in conformity with the terms and conditions prescribed by the Commission.

(i) Any action of the Commission under this section in approving an agreement, or in denying an application for such approval, or in terminating or modifying its approval of an agreement, or prescribing the terms and conditions upon which its approval is to be granted, or in modifying such terms and conditions, shall be construed as having effect solely with reference to the applicability of the relief provisions of subsection (h) of this section. (1977, c. 219, s. 1; 1998-128, s. 7.)

§ 62-152.2. Standard transportation practices.

(a) For the purposes of this section, "standard transportation practices" means:

(1) Uniform cargo liability rules.

(2) Uniform bills of lading or receipts for property being transported.

(3) Uniform cargo credit rules.

(4) Antitrust immunity for joint line rates or routes, classification, and mileage guides.

(b) A person otherwise exempt from regulation by the Commission under Public Law 103-305 may file an application with the Commission to participate in one or more standard transportation practices under rules set out by the Commission. (1995, c. 523, s. 10.1.)

§ 62-153. Contracts of public utilities with certain companies and for services.

(a) All public utilities shall file with the Commission copies of contracts with any affiliated or subsidiary holding, managing, operating, constructing, engineering, financing or purchasing company or agency, and when requested by the Commission, copies of contracts with any person selling service of any kind. The Commission may disapprove, after hearing, any such contract if it is found to be unjust or unreasonable, and made for the purpose or with the effect of concealing, transferring or dissipating the earnings of the public utility. Such contracts so disapproved by the Commission shall be void and shall not be carried out by the public utility which is a party thereto, nor shall any payments be made thereunder. Provided, however, that in the case of motor carriers of passengers this subsection shall apply only to such contracts as the Commission shall request such carriers to file.

(b) No public utility shall pay any fees, commissions or compensation of any description whatsoever to any affiliated or subsidiary holding, managing, operating, constructing, engineering, financing or purchasing company or agency for services rendered or to be rendered without first filing copies of all proposed agreements and contracts with the Commission and obtaining its approval. Provided, however, that this subsection shall not apply to (i) motor carriers of passengers

or (ii) power purchase agreements entered into pursuant to the competitive renewable energy procurement process established pursuant to G.S. 62-110.8. (1931, c. 455; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; c. 307, s. 17; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 2017-192, s. 2(b).)

§ 62-154. Surplus power rates.

The Commission is authorized to investigate the sale of surplus electric power and the rates made for such energy, and to prescribe reasonable rules and rates for such sales. (1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-155. Electric power rates to promote conservation.

(a) It is the policy of the State to conserve energy through efficient utilization of all resources.

(b) If the Utilities Commission after study determines that conservation of electricity and economy of operation for the public utility will be furthered thereby, it shall direct each electric public utility to notify its customers by the most economical means available of the anticipated periods in the near future when its generating capacity is likely to be near peak demand and urge its customers to refrain from using electricity at these peak times of the day. In addition, each public utility shall, insofar as practicable, investigate, develop, and put into service, with approval of the Commission, procedures and devices that will temporarily curtail or cut off certain types of appliances or equipment for short periods of time whenever an unusual peak demand threatens to overload its system.

(c) The Commission itself shall inform the general public as to the necessity for controlling demands for electricity at peak periods and shall require the several electric public utilities to carry out its program of information and education in any reasonable manner.

(d) The Commission shall study the feasibility of and, if found to be practicable, just and reasonable, make plans for the public utilities to bill customers by a system of nondiscriminatory peak pricing, with incentive rates for off-peak use of electricity charging more for peak periods than for off-peak periods to reflect the higher cost of providing electric service during periods of peak demand on the utility system. No order regarding such rates shall be issued by the Commission without a prior public hearing, whether in a single electric utility company rate case or in general orders relating to two or more or all electric utilities.

(e) No Class A electric public utility shall apply for any rate change unless it files at the time of the application a report of the probable effect of the proposed rates on peak demand on it and its estimate of the kilowatt hours of electricity that will be used by its customers during the ensuing one year and five years from the time such rates are proposed to become effective.

(f) Each electric public utility serving more than 150,000 North Carolina retail jurisdictional customers as of January 1, 2017, shall file with the Commission an application requesting approval of a program offering reasonable incentives to residential and nonresidential customers for the installation of small customer owned or leased solar energy facilities participating in a public utility's net metering tariff, where the incentive shall be limited to 10 kilowatts alternating current (kW AC) for residential solar installations and 100 kilowatts alternating current (kW AC) for nonresidential solar installations. Each public utility required to offer the incentive program pursuant to this subsection shall be authorized to recover all reasonable and prudent costs of incentives provided to customers and program administrative costs by amortizing the total program incentives distributed during a calendar year and administrative costs over a 20-year period, including a return component adjusted for income taxes at the utility's

overall weighted average cost of capital established in its most recent general rate case, which shall be included in the costs recoverable by the public utility pursuant to G.S. 62-133.8(h). Nothing in this section shall prevent the reasonable and prudent costs of a utility's programs to incentivize customer investment in or leasing of solar energy facilities, including an approved incentive, from being reflected in a utility's rates to be recovered through the annual rider established pursuant to G.S. 62-133.8(h). The program incentive established by each public utility subject to this section shall meet all of the following requirements:

(1) Shall be limited to 10,000 kilowatts (kW) of installed capacity annually starting in January 1, 2018, and continuing until December 31, 2022, and shall provide incentives to participating customers based upon the installed alternating current nameplate capacity of the generators.

(2) Nonresidential installations will also be limited to 5,000 kilowatts (kW) in aggregate for each of the years of the program.

(3) Two thousand five hundred kilowatts (kW) of the capacity for nonresidential installations shall be set aside for use by nonprofit organizations; 50 kilowatts (kW) of the set aside shall be allocated to the NC Greenpower Solar Schools Pilot or a similar program. Any set-aside rebates that are not used by December 31, 2022, shall be reallocated for use by any customer who otherwise qualifies. For purposes of this section, "nonprofit organization" means an organization or association recognized by the Department of Revenue as tax exempt pursuant to G.S. 105-130.11(a), or any bona fide branch, chapter, or affiliate of that organization.

(4) If in any year a portion of the incentives goes unsubscribed, the utility may roll excess incentives over into a subsequent year's allocation. (1975, c. 780, s. 2; 2017-192, s. 8(a).)

§ 62-156. Power sales by small power producers to public utilities.

(a) In the event that a small power producer and an electric public utility are unable to mutually agree to a contract for the sale of electricity or to a price for the electricity purchased by the electric public utility, the Commission shall require the electric public utility to purchase the power, under rates and terms established as provided in subsection (b) or (c) of this section.

(b) At least every two years, the Commission shall determine the standard contract avoided cost rates to be included within the tariffs of each electric public utility and paid by electric public utilities for power purchased from small power producers, according to the following standards:

(1) Standard Contract for Small Power Producers up to 1,000 kilowatts (kW). – The Commission shall approve a standard offer power purchase agreement to be used by the electric public utility in purchasing energy and capacity from small power producers subject to this subsection. Long-term contracts up to 10 years for the purchase of electricity by the electric public utility from small power producers with a design capacity up to and including 1,000 kilowatts (kW) shall be encouraged in order to enhance the economic feasibility of these small power production facilities; provided, however, that when an electric public utility, pursuant to this subsection, has entered into power purchase agreements with small power producers from facilities (i) in the aggregate capacity of 100 megawatts (MW) or more and (ii) which established a legally enforceable

obligation after November 15, 2016, the eligibility threshold for that utility's standard offer shall be reduced to 100 kilowatts (kW).

(2) Avoided Cost of Energy to the Utility. – The rates paid by an electric public utility to a small power producer for energy shall not exceed, over the term of the purchase power contract, the incremental cost to the electric public utility of the electric energy which, but for the purchase from a small power producer, the utility would generate or purchase from another source. A determination of the avoided energy costs to the utility shall include a consideration of the following factors over the term of the power contracts: the expected costs of the additional or existing generating capacity which could be displaced, the expected cost of fuel and other operating expenses of electric energy production which a utility would otherwise incur in generating or purchasing power from another source, and the expected security of the supply of fuel for the utilities' alternative power sources.

(3) Availability and Reliability of Power. – The rates to be paid by electric public utilities for capacity purchased from a small power producer shall be established with consideration of the reliability and availability of the power. A future capacity need shall only be avoided in a year where the utility's most recent biennial integrated resource plan filed with the Commission pursuant to G.S. 62-110.1(c) has identified a projected capacity need to serve system load and the identified need can be met by the type of small power producer resource based upon its availability and reliability of power, other than for (i) swine or poultry waste for which a need is established consistent with G.S. 62-133.8(e) and (f) and (ii) hydropower small power producers with power purchase agreements with an electric public utility in effect as of July 27, 2017, and the renewal of such a power purchase agreement, if the hydroelectric small power producer's facility total capacity is equal to or less than five megawatts (MW).

(c) Rates to be paid by electric public utilities to small power producers not eligible for the utility's standard contract pursuant to subsection (b) of this section shall be established through good-faith negotiations between the utility and small power producer, subject to the Commission's oversight as required by law. In establishing rates for purchases from such small power producers, the utility shall design rates consistent with the most recent Commission-approved avoided cost methodology for a fixed five-year term. Rates for such purchases shall take into account factors related to the individual characteristics of the small power producer, as well as the factors identified in subdivisions (2) and (3) of subsection (b) of this section. Notwithstanding this subsection, small power producers that produce electric energy primarily by the use of any of the following renewable energy resources may negotiate for a fixed-term contract that exceeds five years: (i) swine or poultry waste; (ii) hydropower, if the hydroelectric power facility total capacity is equal to or less than five megawatts (MW); or (iii) landfill gas, manure digester gas, agricultural waste digester gas, sewage digester gas, or sewer sludge digester gas.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, an electric public utility shall not be required to enter into a contract with or purchase power from a small power producer if the electric public utility's obligation to purchase from such small power producers has been terminated pursuant to 18 C.F.R. § 292.309. (1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1219, s. 2; 2017-192, s. 1(b); 2019-132, s. 3(a).)

§ 62-157. Telecommunications relay service.

(a) Finding. – The General Assembly finds and declares that it is in the public interest to provide access to public telecommunications services for hearing impaired or speech impaired persons, including those who also have vision impairment, and that a statewide telecommunications relay service for telephone service should be established.

(a1) Definitions. – For purposes of this section:

(1) "CMRS" is as defined in G.S. 143B-1400.

(2) "CMRS connection" is as defined in G.S. 143B-1400.

(3) "CMRS provider" is as defined in G.S. 143B-1400.

(4) "Exchange access facility" means a connection from a particular telephone subscriber's premises to the telephone system of a service provider, and includes company-provided local access lines, private branch exchange trunks, and centrex network access registers.

(5) "Local service provider" means a local exchange company, competing local provider, or telephone membership corporation.

(b) Authority to Require Surcharge. – The Commission shall require local service providers to impose a monthly surcharge on all residential and business local exchange access facilities to fund a statewide telecommunications relay service by which hearing impaired or speech impaired persons, including those who also have vision impairment, may communicate with others by telephone. This surcharge, however, may not be imposed on participants in the Subscriber Line Charge Waiver Program or the Link-up Carolina Program established by the Commission. This surcharge, and long distance revenues collected under subsection (f) of this section, are not includable in gross receipts subject to the franchise tax levied under G.S. 105-120 or the sales tax levied under G.S. 105-164.4.

(c) Specification of Surcharge. – The Department of Health and Human Services shall initiate a telecommunications relay service by filing a petition with the Commission requesting the service and detailing initial projected required funding. The Commission shall, after giving notice and an opportunity to be heard to other interested parties, set the initial monthly surcharge based upon the amount of funding necessary to implement and operate the service, including a reasonable margin for a reserve. The surcharge shall be identified on customer bills as a special surcharge for provision of a telecommunications relay service for hearing impaired and speech impaired persons. The Commission may, upon petition of any interested party, and after giving notice and an opportunity to be heard to other interested parties, revise the surcharge from time to time if the funding requirements change. In no event shall the surcharge exceed twenty-five cents (25¢) per month for each exchange access facility.

(d) Funds to Be Deposited in Special Account. – The local service providers shall collect the surcharge from their customers and deposit the moneys collected with the State Treasurer, who shall maintain the funds in an interest-bearing, nonreverting account. After consulting with the State Treasurer, the Commission shall direct how and when the local service providers shall deposit these moneys. Revenues from this fund shall be available only to the Department of Health and Human Services to administer the statewide telecommunications relay service program, including its establishment, operation, and promotion. The Commission may allow the Department of Health and Human Services to use, over a rolling 12-month period, up to four cents (4¢) per exchange access facility of the surcharge for the purpose of providing telecommunications devices for hearing impaired or speech impaired persons, including those who also have vision impairment, through a distribution program. The Commission shall prepare such guidelines for the

distribution program as it deems appropriate and in the public interest. Both the Commission and the Public Staff may audit all aspects of the telecommunications relay service program, including the distribution programs, as they do with any public utility subject to the provisions of this Chapter. Equipment paid for with surcharge revenues, as allowed by the Commission, may be distributed only by the Department of Health and Human Services.

(d1) The Department of Health and Human Services shall utilize revenues from the wireless surcharge collected under subsection (i) of this section to support the Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, in accordance with G.S. 143B-216.33, G.S. 143B-216.34, and Chapter 8B of the General Statutes.

(e) Administration of Service. – The Department of Health and Human Services shall administer the statewide telecommunications relay service program, including its establishment, operation, and promotion. The Department may contract out the provision of this service for four-year periods to one or more service providers, using the provisions of G.S. 143-129. The Department shall administer all programs and services, including the Regional Resource Centers within the Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing in accordance with G.S. 143B-216.33, G.S. 143B-216.34, and Chapter 8B of the General Statutes.

(f) Charge to Users. – The users of the telecommunications relay service shall be charged their approved long distance and local rates for telephone services (including the surcharge required by this section), but no additional charges may be imposed for the use of the relay service. The local service providers shall collect revenues from the users of the relay service for long distance services provided through the relay service. These revenues shall be deposited in the special fund established in subsection (d) of this section in a manner determined by the Commission after consulting with the State Treasurer. Local service providers shall be compensated for collection, inquiry, and other administrative services provided by said companies, subject to the approval of the Commission.

(g) Reporting Requirement. – The Commission shall, after consulting with the Department of Health and Human Services, develop a format and filing schedule for a comprehensive financial and operational report on the telecommunications relay service program. The Department of Health and Human Services shall thereafter prepare and file these reports as required by the Commission with the Commission and the Public Staff. The Department shall also be required to report to the Revenue Laws Study Committee.

(h) Power to Regulate. – The Commission shall have the same power to regulate the operation of the telecommunications relay service program as it has to regulate any public utility subject to the provisions of this Chapter.

(i) Wireless Surcharge. – A CMRS provider, as part of its monthly billing process, must collect the same surcharge imposed on each exchange access facility under this section for each CMRS connection. A CMRS provider may deduct a one percent (1%) administrative fee from the total amount of surcharge collected. A CMRS provider shall remit the surcharge collected, less the administrative fee, to the 911 Board in the same manner and with the same frequency as the local service providers remit the surcharge to the State Treasurer. The 911 Board shall remit the funds collected from the surcharge to the special account created under subsection (d) of this section. (1989, c. 599; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 1999-402, s. 1; 2003-341, s. 1; 2007-383, s. 4; 2009-451, s. 10.56(c), (d); 2012-142, s. 10.24(a), (b); 2015-241, s. 7A.3; 2016-94, s. 12J.2.)

§ 62-158. Natural gas expansion.

(a) In order to facilitate the construction of facilities in and the extension of natural gas service to unserved areas, the Commission may, after a hearing, order a natural gas local distribution company to create a special natural gas expansion fund to be used by that company to construct natural gas facilities in areas within the company's franchised territory that otherwise would not be feasible for the company to construct. The fund shall be supervised and administered by the Commission. Any applicable taxes shall be paid out of the fund.

(b) Sources of funding for a natural gas local distribution company's expansion fund may, pursuant to the order of the Commission, after hearing, include:

(1) Refunds to a local distribution company from the company's suppliers of natural gas and transportation services pursuant to refund orders or requirements of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission;

(2) Expansion surcharges by the local distribution company charged to customers purchasing natural gas or transportation services throughout that company's franchised territory; provided, however, in determining the amount of any surcharge the Commission shall take into account the prices of alternative sources of energy and the need to remain competitive with those alternative sources, and the need to maintain just and reasonable rates for natural gas and transportation services for all customers served by the company; provided further that the expansion surcharge shall not be greater than fifteen cents (15¢) per dekatherm; and

(3) Other sources of funding approved by the Commission.

(c) The application of all such funds to expansion projects shall be pursuant to the order of the Commission. The Commission shall ensure that all projects to which expansion funds are applied are consistent with the intent of this section and G.S. 62-2(9). In determining economic feasibility, the Commission shall employ the net present value method of analysis on a project specific basis. Only those projects with a negative net present value shall be determined to be economically infeasible for the company to construct. In no event shall the Commission authorize a distribution from the fund of an amount greater than the negative net present value of any proposed project as determined by the Commission. If at any time a project is determined by the Commission to have become economically feasible, the Commission may require the company to remit to the expansion fund or to customers appropriate portions of the distributions from the fund related to the project, and the Commission may order such funds to be returned with interest in a reasonable amount to be determined by the Commission. Utility plant acquired with expansion funds shall be included in the local distribution company's rate base at zero cost except to the extent such funds have been remitted by the company pursuant to order of the Commission.

(d) The Commission, after hearing, may adopt rules to implement this section, including rules for the establishment of expansion funds, for the use of such funds, for the remittance to the expansion fund or to customers of supplier and transporter refunds and expansion surcharges or other funds that were sources of the expansion fund, and for appropriate accounting, reporting and ratemaking treatment. (1991, c. 598, s. 2; 2011-291, s. 2.15; 2014-120, s. 10(b).)

§ 62-159. Additional funding for natural gas expansion.

(a) In order to facilitate the construction of facilities in and the extension of natural gas service to unserved areas, the Commission may provide funding through appropriations from the General Assembly or the proceeds of general obligation bonds as provided in this section to either (i) an existing natural gas local distribution company; (ii) a person awarded a new franchise; or (iii)

a gas district for the construction of natural gas facilities that it otherwise would not be economically feasible for the company, person, or gas district to construct.

(b) The use of funds provided under this section shall be pursuant to an order of the Commission after a public hearing. The Commission shall ensure that all projects for which funds are provided under this section are consistent with the intent of this section and G.S. 62-2(9). In determining whether to approve the use of funds for a particular project pursuant to this section, the Commission shall consider the scope of a proposed project, including the number of unserved counties and the number of anticipated customers that would be served, the total cost of the project, the extent to which the project is considered feasible, and other relevant factors affecting the public interest. In determining economic feasibility, the Commission shall employ the net present value method of analysis on a project specific basis. Only those projects with a negative net present value shall be determined to be economically infeasible for the company, person, or gas district to construct. In no event shall the Commission provide funding under this section of an amount greater than the negative net present value of any proposed project as determined by the Commission. If at any time a project is determined by the Commission to have become economically feasible, the Commission shall require the recipient of funding to remit to the Commission appropriate funds related to the project, and the Commission may order those funds to be returned with interest in a reasonable amount to be determined by the Commission. Funds returned, together with interest, shall be deposited with the State Treasurer to be used for other expansion projects pursuant to the provisions of this section. Utility plant acquired with expansion funds shall be included in the local distribution company's rate base at zero cost except to the extent such funds have been remitted by the company pursuant to order of the Commission. In the event a gas district wishes to sell or otherwise dispose of facilities financed with funds received under this section, it must first notify the Commission which shall determine the method of repayment or accounting for those funds.

(c) To the extent that one or more of the counties included in a proposed project to be funded pursuant to this section are counties affected by the loss of exclusive franchise rights provided for in G.S. 62-36A(b), the Commission may conclude that the public interest requires that the person obtaining the franchise or funding pursuant to this section be given an exclusive franchise and that the existing franchise be canceled. Any new exclusive franchise granted under this subsection shall be subject to the provisions of G.S. 62-36A(b). This subsection does not apply to gas districts formed under Article 28 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes.

(d) The Commission, after hearing, shall adopt rules to implement this section as soon as practicable. (1998-132, s. 17; 1999-456, s. 17; 2011-291, s. 2.16; 2014-120, s. 10(c).)

§ 62-159.1. Debt collection practices.

(a) A public utility, electric membership corporation, and telephone membership corporation shall not do any of the following in its debt collection practices:

(1) Suspend or disconnect service to a customer because of a past-due and unpaid balance for service incurred by another person who resides with the customer after service has been provided to the customer's household, unless one or more of the following apply:

a. The customer and the person were members of the same household at a different location when the unpaid balance for service was incurred.

b. The person was a member of the customer's current household when the service was established, and the person had an unpaid balance for service at that time.
c. The person is or becomes responsible for the bill for the service to the customer.

(2) Require that in order to continue service, a customer must agree to be liable for the delinquent account of any other person who will reside in the customer's household after the customer receives the service, unless one or more of the following apply:
a. The customer and the person were members of the same household at a different location when the unpaid balance for service was incurred.
b. The person was a member of the customer's current household when the service was established, and the person had an unpaid balance for service at that time.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, if a customer misrepresents his or her identity in a written or verbal agreement for service or receives service using another person's identity, the public utility, electric membership corporation, and telephone membership corporation shall have the power to collect a delinquent account using any remedy provided by law for collecting and enforcing private debts from that customer. (2009-302, s. 1.)

§ 62-159.2. Direct renewable energy procurement for major military installations, public universities, and large customers.

(a) Each electric public utility providing retail electric service to more than 150,000 North Carolina retail jurisdictional customers as of January 1, 2017, shall file with the Commission an application requesting approval of a new program applicable to major military installations, as that term is defined in G.S. 143-215.115(1), The University of North Carolina, as established in Article 1 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes, and other new and existing nonresidential customers with either a contract demand (i) equal to or greater than one megawatt (MW) or (ii) at multiple service locations that, in aggregate, is equal to or greater than five megawatts (MW).

(b) Each public utility's program application required by this section shall provide standard contract terms and conditions for participating customers and for renewable energy suppliers from which the electric public utility procures energy and capacity on behalf of the participating customer. The application shall allow eligible customers to select the new renewable energy facility from which the electric public utility shall procure energy and capacity. The standard terms and conditions available to renewable energy suppliers shall provide a range of terms, between two years and 20 years, from which the participating customer may elect. Eligible customers shall be allowed to negotiate with renewable energy suppliers regarding price terms.

(c) Each contracted amount of capacity shall be limited to no more than one hundred twenty-five percent (125%) of the maximum annual peak demand of the eligible customer premises. Each public utility shall establish reasonable credit requirements for financial assurance for eligible customers that are consistent with the Uniform Commercial Code of North Carolina. Major military installations and The University of North Carolina are exempt from the financial assurance requirements of this section. The requirements of this subsection shall apply except as otherwise provided by law.

(d) The program shall be offered by the electric public utilities subject to this section for a period of five years or until December 31, 2022, whichever is later, and shall not exceed a

combined 600 megawatts (MW) of total capacity. For the public utilities subject to this section, where a major military installation is located within its Commission-assigned service territory, at least 100 megawatts (MW) of new renewable energy facility capacity offered under the program shall be reserved for participation by major military installations. At least 250 megawatts (MW) of new renewable energy facility capacity offered under the programs shall also be reserved for participation by The University of North Carolina. Major military installations and The University of North Carolina must fully subscribe to all their allocations prior to December 31, 2020, or a period of no more than three years after approval of the program, whichever is later. If any portion of total capacity set aside to major military installations or The University of North Carolina is not used, it shall be reallocated for use by any eligible program participant. If any portion of the 600 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy capacity provided for in this section is not awarded prior to the expiration of the program, it shall be reallocated to and included in a competitive procurement in accordance with G.S. 62-110.8(a). The requirements of this subsection shall apply except as otherwise provided by law.

(e) In addition to the participating customer's normal retail bill, the total cost of any renewable energy and capacity procured by or provided by the electric public utility for the benefit of the program customer shall be paid by that customer. The electric public utility shall pay the owner of the renewable energy facility which provided the electricity. The program customer shall receive a bill credit for the energy as determined by the Commission; provided, however, that the bill credit shall not exceed utility's avoided cost. The Commission shall ensure that all other customers are held neutral, neither advantaged nor disadvantaged, from the impact of the renewable electricity procured on behalf of the program customer. (2017-192, s. 3(a); 2021-180, s. 11.19(f2).)

§ 62-159.3. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-159.4. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-159.5. Reserved for future codification purposes.

Article 8.

Securities Regulation.

§ 62-160. Permission to pledge assets.

No public utility shall pledge its faith, credit, moneys or property for the benefit of any holder of its preferred or common stocks or bonds, nor for any other business interest with which it may be affiliated through agents or holding companies or otherwise by the authority of the action of its stockholders, directors, or contract or other agents, the compliance or result of which would in any manner deplete, reduce, conceal, abstract or dissipate the earnings or assets thereof, decrease or increase its liabilities or assets, without first making application to the Commission and by order obtain its permission so to do. (1933, c. 307, s. 17; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-161. Assumption of certain liabilities and obligations to be approved by Commission; refinancing of public utility securities.

(a) No public utility shall issue any securities, or assume any liability or obligation as lessor, lessee, guarantor, indorser, surety, or otherwise, in respect to the securities of any other person unless and until, and then only to the extent that, upon application by such utility, and after

investigation by the Commission of the purposes and uses of the proposed issue, and the proceeds thereof, or of the proposed assumption of obligation or liability in respect of the securities of any other person, the Commission by order authorizes such issue or assumption.

(b) The Commission shall make such order only if it finds that such issue or assumption is (i) for some lawful object within the corporate purposes of the public utility, (ii) is compatible with the public interest, (iii) is necessary or appropriate for or consistent with the proper performance by such utility of its service to the public and will not impair its ability to perform that service, and (iv) is reasonably necessary and appropriate for such purpose.

(c) Any such order of the Commission shall specify the purposes for which any such securities or the proceeds thereof may be used by the public utility making such application.

(d) If a public utility shall apply to the Commission for the refinancing of its outstanding shares of stock by exchanging or redeeming such outstanding shares, the exchange or redemption of such shares of any dividend rate or rates, class or classes, may be made in whole or in part, in the manner and to the extent approved by the Commission, notwithstanding any provisions of law applicable to corporations in general: Provided, that the proposed transactions are found by the Commission to be in the public interest and in the interest of consumers and investors, and provided that any redemption shall be at a price or prices, not less than par, and at a time or times, stated or provided for in the utility's charter or stock certificates. (1933, c. 307, s. 18; 1945, c. 656; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-162. Commission may approve in whole or in part or refuse approval.

The Commission, by its order, may grant or deny the application provided for in the preceding section [G.S. 62-161] as made, or may grant it in part or deny it in part or may grant it with such modification and upon such terms and conditions as the Commission may deem necessary or appropriate in the premises and may, from time to time, for good cause shown, make such supplemental orders in the premises as it may deem necessary or appropriate and may, by any such supplemental order, modify the provisions of any previous order as to the particular purposes, uses, and extent to which or the conditions under which any securities so authorized or the proceeds thereof may be applied; subject always to the requirements of the foregoing section [G.S. 62-161]. (1933, c. 307, s. 19; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-163. Contents of application for permission.

Every application for authority for such issue or assumption shall be made in such form and contain such matters as the Commission may prescribe. Every such application and every certificate of notification hereinafter provided for shall be made under oath, signed and filed on behalf of the public utility by its president, a vice-president, auditor, comptroller, or other executive officer duly designated for that purpose by such utility. (1933, c. 307, s. 20; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-164. Applications to receive immediate attention; continuances.

All applications for the issuance of securities or assumption of liability or obligation shall be placed at the head of the Commission's docket and disposed of promptly, and all such applications shall be disposed of in 30 days after the same are filed with the Commission, unless it is necessary for good cause to continue the same for a longer period for consideration. Whenever such application is continued beyond 30 days after the time it is filed, the order making such continuance must state fully the facts necessitating such continuance. (1933, c. 307, s. 21; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-165. Notifying Commission as to disposition of securities.

Whenever any securities set forth and described in any such application for authority or certificate of notification as pledged or held unencumbered in the treasury of the utility shall, subsequent to the filing of such application or certificate, be sold, pledged, repledged, or otherwise disposed of, by the utility, such utility shall, within 10 days after such sale, pledge, repledge, or other disposition, file with the Commission a certificate of notification to that effect, setting forth therein all such facts as may be required by the Commission. (1933, c. 307, s. 22; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-166. No guarantee on part of State.

Nothing herein shall be construed to imply any guarantee or obligation as to such securities on the part of the State of North Carolina. (1933, c. 307, s. 23; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-167. Article not applicable to note issues and renewals; notice to Commission.

The provisions of the foregoing sections shall not apply to notes issued by a utility for proper purposes and not in violation of law, payable at a period of not more than two years from the date thereof, and shall not apply to like notes issued by a utility payable at a period of not more than two years from date thereof, to pay, retire, discharge, or refund in whole or in part any such note or notes, and shall not apply to renewals thereof from time to time not exceeding in the aggregate six years from the date of the issue of the original note or notes so renewed or refunded. No such notes payable at a period of not more than two years from the date thereof, shall, in whole or in part, directly or indirectly, be paid, retired, discharged or refunded by any issue of securities or another kind of any term or character or from the proceeds thereof without the approval of the Commission. Within 10 days after the making of any such notes, so payable at periods of not more than two years from the date thereof, the utility issuing the same shall file with the Commission a certificate of notification, in such form as may be determined and prescribed by the Commission. (1933, c. 307, ss. 24, 25; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-168. Not applicable to debentures of court receivers.

Nothing contained in this Article shall limit the power of any court having jurisdiction to authorize or cause receiver's certificates or debentures to be issued according to the rules and practice obtained in receivership proceedings in courts of equity. (1933, c. 307, s. 25; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-169. Periodical or special reports.

The Commission shall require periodical or special reports from each public utility issuing any security, including such notes payable at periods of not more than two years from the date thereof, which shall show, in such detail as the Commission may require, the disposition made of such securities and the application of the proceeds. (1933, c. 307, s. 26; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-170. Failure to obtain approval not to invalidate securities or obligations; noncompliance with Article, etc.

(a) Securities issued and obligations and liabilities assumed by a public utility, for which the authorization of the Commission is required, shall not be invalidated because issued or assumed without such authorization therefor having first been obtained or because issued or

assumed contrary to any term or condition of such order of authorization as modified by any order supplemental thereto entered prior to such issuance or assumption.

(b) Securities issued or obligations or liabilities assumed in accordance with all the terms and conditions of the order of authorization therefor shall not be affected by a failure to comply with any provision of this Article or rule or regulation of the Commission relating to procedure and other matters preceding the entry of such order of authorization or order supplemental thereto.

(c) A copy of any order made and entered by the Commission and certified by a clerk of the Commission approving the issuance of any securities or the assumption of any obligation or liability by a public utility shall be sufficient evidence of full and complete compliance by the applicant for such approval with all procedural and other matters required precedent to the entry of such order.

(d) Any public utility which willfully issues any such securities, or assumes any such obligation or liability, or makes any sale or other disposition of securities, or applies any securities or the proceeds thereof to purposes other than the purposes specified in an order of the Commission with respect thereto, contrary to the provisions of this Article, shall be liable to a penalty of not more than ten thousand dollars ($10,000), but such utility is only required to specify in general terms the purpose for which any securities are to be issued, or for which any obligation or liability is to be assumed, and the order of the Commission with respect thereto shall likewise be in general terms. (1933, c. 307, s. 27; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-171. Commission may act jointly with agency of another state where public utility operates.

If a commission or other agency or agencies is empowered by another state to regulate and control the amount and character of securities to be issued by any public utility within such other state, then the Utilities Commission of the State of North Carolina shall have the power to agree with such commission or other agency or agencies of such other state on the issue of stocks, bonds, notes or other evidences of indebtedness by a public utility owning or operating a public utility both in such state and in this State, and shall have the power to approve such issue jointly with such commission or other agency or agencies and to issue joint certificate of such approval: Provided, however, that no such joint approval shall be required in order to express the consent to an approval of such issue by the State of North Carolina if said issue is separately approved by the Utilities Commission of the State of North Carolina. (1933, c. 134, s. 8; c. 307, s. 28; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-172. Financing for certain storm and coal plant retirement recovery costs.

(a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:

(1) Ancillary agreement. – A bond, insurance policy, letter of credit, reserve account, surety bond, interest rate lock or swap arrangement, hedging arrangement, liquidity or credit support arrangement, or other financial arrangement entered into in connection with securitization bonds.

(2) Assignee. – A legally recognized entity to which a public utility assigns, sells, or transfers, other than as security, all or a portion of its interest in or right to securitization property. The term includes a corporation, limited liability company, general partnership or limited partnership, public authority, trust, financing entity, or any entity to which an assignee assigns, sells, or transfers, other than as security, its interest in or right to securitization property.

(3) Bondholder. – A person who holds a securitization bond.

(3a) Coal plant retirement activity. – An activity or activities by a public utility, its affiliates, or its contractors, directly and specifically in connection with the retirement of subcritical coal-fired generating facilities, including decommissioning and restoring the site of such subcritical coal-fired generating facilities and related activities.

(3b) Coal plant retirement charge. – The amounts authorized by the Commission to repay, finance, or refinance coal plant retirement costs and financing costs and that are nonbypassable charges (i) imposed on and part of all retail customer bills, (ii) collected by a public utility or its successors or assignees, or a collection agent, in full, separate and apart from the public utility's base rates, and (iii) paid by all existing or future retail customers receiving transmission or distribution service, or both, from the public utility or its successors or assignees under Commission-approved rate schedules or under special contracts, even if a customer elects to purchase electricity from an alternative electricity supplier following a fundamental change in regulation of public utilities in this State.

(3c) Coal plant retirement costs. – All of the following, as applicable, in the determination of the Commission in a separate proceeding:

a. One hundred percent (100%) of the remaining net book value of all of a public utility's subcritical coal-fired electric generating facilities at the time of retirement.

b. The public utility's cost of capital from the date of the applicable coal plant retirement to the date the securitization bonds are issued, calculated using the public utility's weighted average cost of capital as defined in its most recent base rate case proceeding before the Commission net of applicable income tax savings related to the interest component; provided, however, if the coal plant is included in base rates for all or any portion of the interval between date of the applicable coal plant retirement and the securitization bonds are issued, coal plant retirement costs shall not include the public utility's cost of capital for such period of time.

c. Coal plant retirement costs shall include coal plant retirement activities and shall be net of applicable insurance proceeds, tax benefits, and government grants, or aid of any kind and where determined appropriate by the Commission. Coal plant retirement costs include costs of repurchasing equity or retiring any existing indebtedness relating to the retirement of a subcritical coal-fired electric generating facility.

d. With respect to coal plant retirement costs that the public utility expects to incur, any difference between costs expected to be incurred and actual, reasonable, and prudent costs incurred, or any other ratemaking adjustments appropriate to fairly and reasonably assign or allocate coal plant retirement bonds to customers over time, shall be addressed in a future general rate proceeding, as may be facilitated by other orders of the Commission issued at the time or prior to such proceeding; provided, however, that the Commission's adoption of a financing order

and approval of the issuance of coal plant retirement bonds may not be revoked or otherwise modified.

(4) Code. – The Uniform Commercial Code, Chapter 25 of the General Statutes.

(5) Commission. – The North Carolina Utilities Commission.

(6) Financing costs. – The term includes all of the following costs applicable to the type of securitization bond, including:

a. Interest and acquisition, defeasance, or redemption premiums payable on the securitization bonds.

b. Any payment required under an ancillary agreement and any amount required to fund or replenish a reserve account or other accounts established under the terms of any indenture, ancillary agreement, or other financing documents pertaining to the securitization bonds.

c. Any other cost related to issuing, supporting, repaying, refunding, and servicing the securitization bonds, including, servicing fees, accounting and auditing fees, trustee fees, legal fees, consulting fees, structuring adviser fees, administrative fees, placement and underwriting fees, independent director and manager fees, capitalized interest, rating agency fees, stock exchange listing and compliance fees, security registration fees, filing fees, information technology programming costs, and any other costs necessary to otherwise ensure the timely payment of the securitization bonds or other amounts or charges payable in connection with the securitization bonds, including costs related to obtaining the financing order.

d. Any taxes and license fees or other fees imposed on the revenues generated from the collection of the securitization charges, or otherwise resulting from the collection of the charges, in any such case whether paid, payable, or accrued.

e. Any State and local taxes, franchise, gross receipts, and other taxes or similar charges, including regulatory assessment fees, whether paid, payable, or accrued.

f. Any costs incurred by the Commission or Public Staff for any outside consultants or counsel retained in connection with the financing of the securitization costs.

(7) Financing order. – An order that authorizes the issuance of securitization bonds; the imposition, collection, and periodic adjustments of a securitization charge; the creation of securitization property; and the sale, assignment, or transfer of securitization property to an assignee.

(8) Financing party. – Bondholders and trustees, collateral agents, any party under an ancillary agreement, or any other person acting for the benefit of bondholders.

(9) Financing statement. – Defined in Article 9 of the Code.

(10) Pledgee. – A financing party to which a public utility or its successors or assignees mortgages, negotiates, pledges, or creates a security interest or lien on all or any portion of its interest in or right to securitization property.

(11) Public utility. – A public utility, as defined in G.S. 62-3, that sells electric power to retail electric customers in the State.

(11a) Securitization activities. – The aggregate of activities that qualify as either (i) storm recovery activities, as defined in subdivision (13) of this subsection, or (ii) coal plant retirement activities, as defined in subdivision (3a) of this subsection, as the case may be.

(11b) Securitization bonds. – Bonds, debentures, notes, certificates of participation, certificates of beneficial interest, certificates of ownership, or other evidence of indebtedness or ownership that are issued by a public utility or an assignee pursuant to a financing order, the proceeds of which are used directly or indirectly to recover, finance, or refinance Commission-approved coal plant retirement costs or storm recovery costs, or both, and financing costs, and that are secured by or payable from securitization property. If certificates of participation or ownership are issued, references in this section to principal, interest, or premium shall be construed to refer to comparable amounts under those certificates.

(11c) Securitization charges. – Storm recovery charges, as defined in subdivision (15) of this subsection, or coal plant retirement charges, as defined in subdivision (3b) of this subsection, or both, as the case may be.

(11d) Securitization costs. – Storm recovery costs, as defined in subdivision (16) of this subsection, or coal plant retirement costs, as defined in subdivision (3c) of this subsection, as the case may be.

(11e) Securitization property. – All of the following:

a. All rights and interests of a public utility or successor or assignee of the public utility under a financing order, including the right to impose, bill, charge, collect, and receive coal plant retirement charges, storm recovery charges, or both, as authorized under the financing order and to obtain periodic adjustments to such charges as provided in the financing order.

b. All revenues, collections, claims, rights to payments, payments, money, or proceeds arising from the rights and interests specified in the financing order, regardless of whether such revenues, collections, claims, rights to payment, payments, money, or proceeds are imposed, billed, received, collected, or maintained together with or commingled with other revenues, collections, rights to payment, payments, money, or proceeds.

(12) Storm. – Individually or collectively, a named tropical storm or hurricane, a tornado, ice storm or snow storm, flood, an earthquake, or other significant weather or natural disaster.

(13) Storm recovery activity. – An activity or activities by a public utility, its affiliates, or its contractors, directly and specifically in connection with the restoration of service and infrastructure associated with electric power outages affecting customers of a public utility as the result of a storm or storms, including activities related to mobilization, staging, and construction, reconstruction, replacement, or repair of electric generation, transmission, distribution, or general plant facilities.

(14) Repealed by Session Laws 2025-78, s. 5, effective July 29, 2025.

(15) Storm recovery charge. – The amounts authorized by the Commission to repay, finance, or refinance storm recovery costs and financing costs and that are nonbypassable charges (i) imposed on and part of all retail customer bills, (ii) collected by a public utility or its successors or assignees, or a collection agent, in full, separate and apart from the public utility's base rates, and (iii) paid by all existing or future retail customers receiving transmission or distribution service, or both, from the public utility or its successors or assignees under Commission-approved rate schedules or under special contracts, even if a customer elects to purchase electricity from an alternative electricity supplier following a fundamental change in regulation of public utilities in this State.

(16) Storm recovery costs. – All of the following:

a. All incremental costs, including capital costs, that a public utility has incurred or expects to incur as a result of the applicable storm that are caused by, associated with, or remain as a result of undertaking storm recovery activity. Such costs include the public utility's cost of capital from the date of the applicable storm to the date the securitization bonds are issued calculated using the public utility's weighted average cost of capital as defined in its most recent base rate case proceeding before the Commission net of applicable income tax savings related to the interest component.

b. Storm recovery costs shall be net of applicable insurance proceeds, tax benefits and any other amounts intended to reimburse the public utility for storm recovery activities such as government grants, or aid of any kind and where determined appropriate by the Commission, and may include adjustments for capital replacement and operating costs previously considered in determining normal amounts in the public utility's most recent general rate proceeding. Storm recovery costs includes the cost to replenish and fund any storm reserves and costs of repurchasing equity or retiring any existing indebtedness relating to storm recovery activities.

c. With respect to storm recovery costs that the public utility expects to incur, any difference between costs expected to be incurred and actual, reasonable and prudent costs incurred, shall be addressed in a future general rate proceeding, as may be facilitated by other orders of the Commission issued at the time or prior to such proceeding; provided, however, that the Commission's adoption of a financing order and approval of the issuance of securitization bonds may not be revoked or otherwise modified.

d. Notwithstanding any other provision herein, storm recovery costs deemed reasonable and prudent by the Commission, including any storm reserve amounts, shall be fully recoverable in a financing order for securitization bonds and shall not be removed, reduced, or disallowed on the basis of storm cost-related treatment in any prior regulatory orders or by application of the quantifiable benefits comparison required herein.

(17) Repealed by Session Laws 2025-78, s. 5, effective July 29, 2025.

(18) Subcritical coal-fired generating facility. – A plant that utilizes pulverized coal combustion technology in which the steam pressure within the boiler is below 3,200 pounds per square inch and the temperature is below 1,025 degrees Fahrenheit (550 degrees Celsius) and has a conversion of the energy in the coal to electricity of no greater than thirty-seven percent (37%).

(19) Traditional method of recovery. – The standard method by which a public utility generally finances and recovers costs incurred for storm recovery activities or the remaining net book value of a retired generation facility through base rates, absent securitization. The method to calculate the traditional method of recovery shall be limited to the following without additional modification or reductions:

a. The recovery of costs, including both capital and O&M costs in customer rates over a time period of not less than five years; and

b. The application of carrying costs at the public utility's most recently approved weighted average cost of capital from the date the costs, including both capital and O&M costs, are incurred until fully recovered.

(a1) References to the terms "storm recovery bonds," "storm recovery charges," and "storm recovery property" in any financing order issued by the Commission prior to the date this act [subsection] becomes effective [July 29, 2025] shall mean "securitization bonds," "securitization charges," or "securitization property," as defined in subsection (a) of this section.

(b) Financing Orders. –

(1) A public utility may petition the Commission for a financing order to finance securitization costs. The petition shall include the following, as applicable:

a. A description of the securitization activities that the public utility has undertaken or proposes to undertake and the reasons for undertaking the activities, with clear identification of those relating to storm recovery activities, or coal plant retirement activities, or both, or if the public utility is subject to a settlement agreement as contemplated by subdivision (2) of this subsection, a description of the settlement agreement.

b. The securitization costs and estimate of the costs of any securitization activities that are being undertaken but are not completed.

c. The level of the storm recovery reserve, if any, that the public utility proposes to establish or replenish and has determined would be appropriate to recover through securitization bonds and is seeking to so recover and such level that the public utility is funding or will seek to fund through other means, together with a description of the factors and calculations used in determining the amounts and methods of recovery.

d. An indicator of whether the public utility proposes to finance all or a portion of the securitization costs using securitization bonds. If the public utility proposes to finance a portion of the costs, the public utility must identify the specific portion in the petition. By electing not to finance a portion of such storm recovery costs using securitization bonds, a public utility shall not be deemed to waive its right to recover such costs pursuant to a separate proceeding with the Commission.

e. An estimate of the financing costs related to the securitization bonds.

f. An estimate of the securitization charges necessary to recover the securitization costs, including the storm recovery reserve amount, if any, determined appropriate by the Commission, and financing costs and the period for recovery of such costs.

g. A comparison between the net present value of the costs to customers that are estimated to result from the issuance of securitization bonds and the costs that would result from the application of the traditional method and recovering applicable securitization costs from customers. The comparison should demonstrate that the issuance of securitization bonds and the imposition of securitization charges are expected to provide quantifiable benefits to customers compared to the traditional method of recovery.

h. Direct testimony and exhibits supporting the petition.

(2) If a public utility is subject to a settlement agreement that governs the type and amount of principal costs that could be included in securitization costs and the public utility proposes to finance all or a portion of the principal costs using securitization bonds, then the public utility must file a petition with the Commission for review and approval of those principal costs no later than 90 days before filing a petition for a financing order pursuant to this section.

(3) Petition and order. –

a. Proceedings on a petition submitted pursuant to this subdivision begin with the petition by a public utility, filed subject to the time frame specified in subdivision (2) of this subsection, if applicable, and shall be disposed of in accordance with the requirements of this Chapter and the rules of the Commission, except as follows:

1. Within 14 days after the date the petition is filed, the Commission shall establish a procedural schedule that permits a Commission decision no later than 135 days after the date the petition is filed.

2. No later than 135 days after the date the petition is filed, the Commission shall issue a financing order or an order rejecting the petition. A party to the Commission proceeding may petition the Commission for reconsideration of the financing order within five days after the date of its issuance.

b. A financing order issued by the Commission to a public utility shall include all of the following elements, as applicable:

1. Except for changes made pursuant to the formula-based mechanism authorized under this section, the amount of securitization costs, including the level of storm recovery reserves, if any, to be financed using securitization bonds. The Commission shall describe and estimate the amount of financing costs that may be recovered through securitization charges and specify the period over which securitization costs and financing costs may be recovered.

2. A finding that the proposed issuance of securitization bonds and the imposition and collection of a securitization charge are expected to provide quantifiable benefits to customers as compared to the costs that would have been incurred absent the issuance of securitization bonds through the traditional method of recovery.
3. A finding that the structuring and pricing of the securitization bonds are reasonably expected to result in the lowest securitization charges consistent with market conditions at the time the securitization bonds are priced and the terms set forth in such financing order.
4. A requirement that, for so long as the securitization bonds are outstanding and until all financing costs have been paid in full, the imposition and collection of securitization charges authorized under a financing order shall be nonbypassable and paid by all existing and future retail customers receiving transmission or distribution service, or both, from the public utility or its successors or assignees under Commission-approved rate schedules or under special contracts, even if a customer elects to purchase electricity from an alternative electric supplier following a fundamental change in regulation of public utilities in this State.
5. A determination of what portion, if any, of the storm recovery reserves must be held in a funded reserve and any limitations on how the reserve may be held, accessed, or used.
6. A formula-based true-up mechanism for making, at least annually, expeditious periodic adjustments in the securitization charges that customers are required to pay pursuant to the financing order and for making any adjustments that are necessary to correct for any overcollection or undercollection of the charges or to otherwise ensure the timely payment of securitization bonds and financing costs and other required amounts and charges payable in connection with the securitization bonds.
7. The securitization property that is, or shall be, created in favor of a public utility or its successors or assignees and that shall be used to pay or secure securitization bonds and all financing costs.
8. The degree of flexibility to be afforded to the public utility in establishing the terms and conditions of the securitization bonds, including, but not limited to, repayment schedules, expected interest rates, and other financing costs.
9. How securitization charges will be allocated among customer classes.
10. A requirement that, after the final terms of an issuance of securitization bonds have been established and before the

issuance of securitization bonds, the public utility determines the resulting initial storm recovery charge in accordance with the financing order and that such initial securitization charge be final and effective upon the issuance of such securitization bonds without further Commission action so long as the securitization charge is consistent with the financing order.

11. A method of tracing funds collected as securitization charges, or other proceeds of securitization property, and determine that such method shall be deemed the method of tracing such funds and determining the identifiable cash proceeds of any securitization property subject to a financing order under applicable law.
12. Any other conditions not otherwise inconsistent with this section that the Commission determines are appropriate.

c. A financing order issued to a public utility may provide that creation of the public utility's securitization property is conditioned upon, and simultaneous with, the sale or other transfer of the securitization property to an assignee and the pledge of the storm recovery property to secure securitization bonds.

d. If the Commission issues a financing order, the public utility shall file with the Commission at least annually a petition or a letter applying the formula-based mechanism and, based on estimates of consumption for each rate class and other mathematical factors, requesting administrative approval to make the applicable adjustments. The review of the filing shall be limited to determining whether there are any mathematical or clerical errors in the application of the formula-based mechanism relating to the appropriate amount of any overcollection or undercollection of securitization charges and the amount of an adjustment. The adjustments shall ensure the recovery of revenues sufficient to provide for the payment of principal, interest, acquisition, defeasance, financing costs, or redemption premium and other fees, costs, and charges in respect of securitization bonds approved under the financing order. Within 30 days after receiving a public utility's request pursuant to this paragraph, the Commission shall either approve the request or inform the public utility of any mathematical or clerical errors in its calculation. If the Commission informs the utility of mathematical or clerical errors in its calculation, the utility may correct its error and refile its request. The time frames previously described in this paragraph shall apply to a refiled request.

e. Subsequent to the transfer of securitization property to an assignee or the issuance of securitization bonds authorized thereby, whichever is earlier, a financing order is irrevocable and, except for changes made pursuant to the formula-based mechanism authorized in this section, the Commission may not amend, modify, or terminate the financing order by any subsequent action or reduce, impair, postpone, terminate, or otherwise adjust securitization charges approved in the financing order.

After the issuance of a financing order, the public utility retains sole discretion regarding whether to assign, sell, or otherwise transfer securitization property or to cause securitization bonds to be issued, including the right to defer or postpone such assignment, sale, transfer, or issuance.

(4) At the request of a public utility, the Commission may commence a proceeding and issue a subsequent financing order that provides for refinancing, retiring, or refunding securitization bonds issued pursuant to the original financing order if the Commission finds that the subsequent financing order satisfies all of the criteria specified in this section for a financing order. Effective upon retirement of the refunded securitization bonds and the issuance of new securitization bonds, the Commission shall adjust the related securitization charges accordingly.

(5) Within 60 days after the Commission issues a financing order or a decision denying a request for reconsideration or, if the request for reconsideration is granted, within 30 days after the Commission issues its decision on reconsideration, an adversely affected party may petition for judicial review in the Supreme Court of North Carolina. Review on appeal shall be based solely on the record before the Commission and briefs to the court and is limited to determining whether the financing order, or the order on reconsideration, conforms to the State Constitution and State and federal law and is within the authority of the Commission under this section.

(6) Duration of financing order. –

a. A financing order remains in effect and securitization property under the financing order continues to exist until securitization bonds issued pursuant to the financing order have been paid in full or defeased and, in each case, all Commission-approved financing costs of such securitization bonds have been recovered in full.

b. A financing order issued to a public utility remains in effect and unabated notwithstanding the reorganization, bankruptcy or other insolvency proceedings, merger, or sale of the public utility or its successors or assignees.

(c) Exceptions to Commission Jurisdiction. –

(1) The Commission may not, in exercising its powers and carrying out its duties regarding any matter within its authority pursuant to this Chapter, consider the securitization bonds issued pursuant to a financing order to be the debt of the public utility other than for federal income tax purposes, consider the securitization charges paid under the financing order to be the revenue of the public utility for any purpose, or consider the securitization costs or financing costs specified in the financing order to be the costs of the public utility, nor may the Commission determine any action taken by a public utility which is consistent with the financing order to be unjust or unreasonable.

(2) The Commission may not order or otherwise directly or indirectly require a public utility to use securitization bonds to finance any project, addition, plant, facility, extension, capital improvement, early retirement, equipment, or any other expenditure. After the issuance of a financing order, the public utility

retains sole discretion regarding whether to cause the securitization bonds to be issued, including the right to defer or postpone such sale, assignment, transfer, or issuance. Nothing shall prevent the public utility from abandoning the issuance of securitization bonds under the financing order by filing with the Commission a statement of abandonment and the reasons therefor. The Commission may not refuse to allow a public utility to recover securitization costs in an otherwise permissible fashion, or refuse or condition authorization or approval of the issuance and sale by a public utility of securities or the assumption by the public utility of liabilities or obligations, solely because of the potential availability of securitization bond financing.

(d) Public Utility Duties. – The electric bills of a public utility that has obtained a financing order and caused securitization bonds to be issued must comply with the provisions of this subsection; however, the failure of a public utility to comply with this subsection does not invalidate, impair, or affect any financing order, securitization property, securitization charge, or securitization bonds. The public utility must do the following:

(1) Explicitly reflect on such bill the portions representing the storm recovery charge or the portions representing the coal plant retirement charge approved in a financing order issued to the public utility and, if the securitization property has been transferred to an assignee, must include a statement to the effect that the assignee is the owner of the rights to the applicable securitization charges and that the public utility or other entity, if applicable, is acting as a collection agent or servicer for the assignee. The tariff applicable to customers must indicate the storm recovery charge, or the coal plant retirement charge, or both, and the ownership of the charges.

(2) Include the storm recovery charge and the coal plant retirement charge as separate line items on each customer's bill consolidated by the type of charge with supporting detail included on each bill, in a periodic bill attachment or by way of a reference to a tariff or explanation of the bill prepared by the public utility as approved by the Commission, provided each charge is not commingled with charges of a different type.

(e) Securitization Property. –

(1) Provisions applicable to securitization property. –

a. All securitization property that is specified in a financing order constitutes an existing, present intangible property right or interest therein, notwithstanding that the imposition and collection of securitization charges depends on the public utility, to which the financing order is issued, performing its servicing functions relating to the collection of securitization charges and on future electricity consumption. The property exists (i) regardless of whether or not the revenues or proceeds arising from the property have been billed, have accrued, or have been collected and (ii) notwithstanding the fact that the value or amount of the property is dependent on the future provision of service to customers by the public utility or its successors or assignees and the future consumption of electricity by customers.

b. Securitization property specified in a financing order exists until securitization bonds issued pursuant to the financing order are paid in

full and all financing costs and other costs of such securitization bonds have been recovered in full.

c. All or any portion of securitization property specified in a financing order issued to a public utility may be transferred, sold, conveyed, or assigned to a successor or assignee that is wholly owned, directly or indirectly, by the public utility and created for the limited purpose of acquiring, owning, or administering securitization property or issuing securitization bonds under the financing order. All or any portion of securitization property may be pledged to secure securitization bonds issued pursuant to the financing order, amounts payable to financing parties and to counterparties under any ancillary agreements, and other financing costs. Any transfer, sale, conveyance, assignment, grant of a security interest in or pledge of securitization property by a public utility, or an affiliate of the public utility, to an assignee, to the extent previously authorized in a financing order, does not require the prior consent and approval of the Commission.

d. If a public utility defaults on any required payment of securitization charges arising from securitization property specified in a financing order, a court, upon application by an interested party, and without limiting any other remedies available to the applying party, shall order the sequestration and payment of the revenues arising from the securitization property to the financing parties or their assignees. Any such financing order remains in full force and effect notwithstanding any reorganization, bankruptcy, or other insolvency proceedings with respect to the public utility or its successors or assignees.

e. The interest of a transferee, purchaser, acquirer, assignee, or pledgee in securitization property specified in a financing order issued to a public utility, and in the revenue and collections arising from that property, is not subject to setoff, counterclaim, surcharge, or defense by the public utility or any other person or in connection with the reorganization, bankruptcy, or other insolvency of the public utility or any other entity.

f. Any successor to a public utility, whether pursuant to any reorganization, bankruptcy, or other insolvency proceeding or whether pursuant to any merger or acquisition, sale, or other business combination, or transfer by operation of law, as a result of public utility restructuring or otherwise, must perform and satisfy all obligations of, and have the same rights under a financing order as, the public utility under the financing order in the same manner and to the same extent as the public utility, including collecting and paying to the person entitled to receive the revenues, collections, payments, or proceeds of the securitization property. Nothing in this sub-subdivision is intended to limit or impair any authority of the Commission concerning the transfer or succession of interests of public utilities.

g. Securitization bonds shall be nonrecourse to the credit or any assets of the public utility other than the securitization property as specified in the financing order and any rights under any ancillary agreement.

(2) Provisions applicable to security interests. –

a. The creation, perfection, and enforcement of any security interest in securitization property to secure the repayment of the principal and interest and other amounts payable in respect of securitization bonds; amounts payable under any ancillary agreement and other financing costs are governed by this subsection and not by the provisions of the Code.

b. A security interest in securitization property is created, valid, and binding and perfected at the later of the time: (i) the financing order is issued, (ii) a security agreement is executed and delivered by the debtor granting such security interest, (iii) the debtor has rights in such securitization property or the power to transfer rights in such securitization property, or (iv) value is received for the securitization property. The description of securitization property in a security agreement is sufficient if the description refers to this section and the financing order creating the storm recovery property.

c. A security interest shall attach without any physical delivery of collateral or other act, and, upon the filing of a financing statement with the office of the Secretary of State, the lien of the security interest shall be valid, binding, and perfected against all parties having claims of any kind in tort, contract, or otherwise against the person granting the security interest, regardless of whether the parties have notice of the lien. Also upon this filing, a transfer of an interest in the securitization property shall be perfected against all parties having claims of any kind, including any judicial lien or other lien creditors or any claims of the seller or creditors of the seller, and shall have priority over all competing claims other than any prior security interest, ownership interest, or assignment in the property previously perfected in accordance with this section.

d. The Secretary of State shall maintain any financing statement filed to perfect any security interest under this section in the same manner that the Secretary of State maintains financing statements filed by transmitting utilities under the Code. The filing of a financing statement under this section shall be governed by the provisions regarding the filing of financing statements in the Code.

e. The priority of a security interest in securitization property is not affected by the commingling of securitization charges with other amounts. Any pledgee or secured party shall have a perfected security interest in the amount of all securitization charges that are deposited in any cash or deposit account of the qualifying utility in which securitization charges have been commingled with other funds and any other security interest that may apply to those funds shall be terminated when they are transferred to a segregated account for the assignee or a financing party.

f. No application of the formula-based adjustment mechanism as provided in this section will affect the validity, perfection, or priority of a security interest in or transfer of securitization property.

g. If a default or termination occurs under the securitization bonds, the financing parties or their representatives may foreclose on or otherwise enforce their lien and security interest in any securitization property as if they were secured parties with a perfected and prior lien under the Code, and the Commission may order amounts arising from securitization charges be transferred to a separate account for the financing parties' benefit, to which their lien and security interest shall apply. On application by or on behalf of the financing parties, the Superior Court of Wake County shall order the sequestration and payment to them of revenues arising from the securitization charges.

(3) Provisions applicable to the sale, assignment, or transfer of securitization property. -

a. Any sale, assignment, or other transfer of securitization property shall be an absolute transfer and true sale of, and not a pledge of or secured transaction relating to, the seller's right, title, and interest in, to, and under the securitization property if the documents governing the transaction expressly state that the transaction is a sale or other absolute transfer other than for federal and State income tax purposes. For all purposes other than federal and State income tax purposes, the parties' characterization of a transaction as a sale of an interest in securitization property shall be conclusive that the transaction is a true sale and that ownership has passed to the party characterized as the purchaser, regardless of whether the purchaser has possession of any documents evidencing or pertaining to the interest. A transfer of an interest in securitization property may be created only when all of the following have occurred: (i) the financing order creating the securitization property has become effective, (ii) the documents evidencing the transfer of securitization property have been executed by the assignor and delivered to the assignee, and (iii) value is received for the securitization property. After such a transaction, the securitization property is not subject to any claims of the transferor or the transferor's creditors, other than creditors holding a prior security interest in the securitization property perfected in accordance with subdivision (2) of subsection (e) of this section.

b. The characterization of the sale, assignment, or other transfer as an absolute transfer and true sale and the corresponding characterization of the property interest of the purchaser, shall not be affected or impaired by the occurrence of any of the following factors:

1. Commingling of securitization charges with other amounts.
2. The retention by the seller of (i) a partial or residual interest, including an equity interest, in the securitization property, whether direct or indirect, or whether subordinate or otherwise, or (ii) the right to recover costs associated with taxes, franchise

fees, or license fees imposed on the collection of securitization charges.

3. Any recourse that the purchaser may have against the seller.
4. Any indemnification rights, obligations, or repurchase rights made or provided by the seller.
5. The obligation of the seller to collect securitization charges on behalf of an assignee.
6. The transferor acting as the servicer of the securitization charges or the existence of any contract that authorizes or requires the public utility, to the extent that any interest in securitization property is sold or assigned, to contract with the assignee or any financing party that it will continue to operate its system to provide service to its customers, will collect amounts in respect of the securitization charges for the benefit and account of such assignee or financing party, and will account for and remit such amounts to or for the account of such assignee or financing party.
7. The treatment of the sale, conveyance, assignment, or other transfer for tax, financial reporting, or other purposes.
8. The granting or providing to bondholders a preferred right to the securitization property or credit enhancement by the public utility or its affiliates with respect to such securitization bonds.
9. Any application of the formula-based adjustment mechanism as provided in this section.

c. Any right that a public utility has in the securitization property before its pledge, sale, or transfer or any other right created under this section or created in the financing order and assignable under this section or assignable pursuant to a financing order is property in the form of a contract right or a chose in action. Transfer of an interest in securitization property to an assignee is enforceable only upon the later of (i) the issuance of a financing order, (ii) the assignor having rights in such securitization property or the power to transfer rights in such securitization property to an assignee, (iii) the execution and delivery by the assignor of transfer documents in connection with the issuance of securitization bonds, and (iv) the receipt of value for the securitization property. An enforceable transfer of an interest in securitization property to an assignee is perfected against all third parties, including subsequent judicial or other lien creditors, when a notice of that transfer has been given by the filing of a financing statement in accordance with sub-subdivision c. of subdivision (2) of this subsection. The transfer is perfected against third parties as of the date of filing.

d. The Secretary of State shall maintain any financing statement filed to perfect any sale, assignment, or transfer of securitization property under this section in the same manner that the Secretary maintains financing statements filed by transmitting utilities under the Code. The filing of any financing statement under this section shall be governed by the provisions regarding the filing of financing statements in the Code. The

filing of such a financing statement is the only method of perfecting a transfer of securitization property.

e. The priority of a transfer perfected under this section is not impaired by any later modification of the financing order or securitization property or by the commingling of funds arising from securitization property with other funds. Any other security interest that may apply to those funds, other than a security interest perfected under subdivision (2) of this subsection, is terminated when they are transferred to a segregated account for the assignee or a financing party. If securitization property has been transferred to an assignee or financing party, any proceeds of that property must be held in trust for the assignee or financing party.

f. The priority of the conflicting interests of assignees in the same interest or rights in any securitization property is determined as follows:

1. Conflicting perfected interests or rights of assignees rank according to priority in time of perfection. Priority dates from the time a filing covering the transfer is made in accordance with sub-subdivision c. of subdivision (2) of this subsection.
2. A perfected interest or right of an assignee has priority over a conflicting unperfected interest or right of an assignee.
3. A perfected interest or right of an assignee has priority over a person who becomes a lien creditor after the perfection of such assignee's interest or right.

(f) Description or Indication of Property. – The description of securitization property being transferred to an assignee in any sale agreement, purchase agreement, or other transfer agreement, granted or pledged to a pledgee in any security agreement, pledge agreement, or other security document, or indicated in any financing statement is only sufficient if such description or indication refers to the financing order that created the securitization property and states that the agreement or financing statement covers all or part of the property described in the financing order. This section applies to all purported transfers of, and all purported grants or liens or security interests in, securitization property, regardless of whether the related sale agreement, purchase agreement, other transfer agreement, security agreement, pledge agreement, or other security document was entered into, or any financing statement was filed.

(g) Financing Statements. – All financing statements referenced in this section are subject to Part 5 of Article 9 of the Code, except that the requirement as to continuation statements does not apply.

(h) Choice of Law. – The law governing the validity, enforceability, attachment, perfection, priority, and exercise of remedies with respect to the transfer of an interest or right or the pledge or creation of a security interest in any securitization property shall be the laws of this State.

(i) Securitization Bonds Not Public Debt. – Neither the State nor its political subdivisions are liable on any securitization bonds, and the bonds are not a debt or a general obligation of the State or any of its political subdivisions, agencies, or instrumentalities, nor are they special obligations or indebtedness of the State or any agency or political subdivision. An issue of securitization bonds does not, directly, indirectly, or contingently, obligate the State or any agency, political subdivision, or instrumentality of the State to levy any tax or make any appropriation for payment of the securitization bonds, other than in their capacity as consumers of electricity. All securitization bonds must contain on the face thereof a statement to the following effect: "Neither

the full faith and credit nor the taxing power of the State of North Carolina is pledged to the payment of the principal of, or interest on, this bond."

(j) Legal Investment. – All of the following entities may legally invest any sinking funds, moneys, or other funds in securitization bonds:

(1) Subject to applicable statutory restrictions on State or local investment authority, the State, units of local government, political subdivisions, public bodies, and public officers, except for members of the Commission.

(2) Banks and bankers, savings and loan associations, credit unions, trust companies, savings banks and institutions, investment companies, insurance companies, insurance associations, and other persons carrying on a banking or insurance business.

(3) Personal representatives, guardians, trustees, and other fiduciaries.

(4) All other persons authorized to invest in bonds or other obligations of a similar nature.

(k) Obligation of Nonimpairment. –

(1) The State and its agencies, including the Commission, pledge and agree with bondholders, the owners of the securitization property, and other financing parties that the State and its agencies will not take any action listed in this subdivision. This paragraph does not preclude limitation or alteration if full compensation is made by law for the full protection of the securitization charges collected pursuant to a financing order and of the bondholders and any assignee or financing party entering into a contract with the public utility. The prohibited actions are as follows:

a. Alter the provisions of this section, which authorize the Commission to create an irrevocable contract right or chose in action by the issuance of a financing order, to create securitization property, and make the securitization charges imposed by a financing order irrevocable, binding, or nonbypassable charges.

b. Take or permit any action that impairs or would impair the value of securitization property or the security for the securitization bonds or revises the securitization costs for which recovery is authorized.

c. In any way impair the rights and remedies of the bondholders, assignees, and other financing parties.

d. Except for changes made pursuant to the formula-based adjustment mechanism authorized under this section, reduce, alter, or impair securitization charges that are to be imposed, billed, charged, collected, and remitted for the benefit of the bondholders, any assignee, and any other financing parties until any and all principal, interest, premium, financing costs and other fees, expenses, or charges incurred, and any contracts to be performed, in connection with the related securitization bonds have been paid and performed in full.

(2) Any person or entity that issues securitization bonds may include the language specified in this subsection in the securitization bonds and related documentation.

(*l*) Not a Public Utility. – An assignee or financing party is not a public utility or person providing electric service by virtue of engaging in the transactions described in this section.

(m) Conflicts. – If there is a conflict between this section and any other law regarding the attachment, assignment, or perfection, or the effect of perfection, or priority of, assignment or transfer of, or security interest in securitization property, this section shall govern.

(n) Consultation. – In making determinations under this section, the Commission or Public Staff or both may engage an outside consultant and counsel.

(o) Effect of Invalidity. – If any provision of this section is held invalid or is invalidated, superseded, replaced, repealed, or expires for any reason, that occurrence does not affect the validity of any action allowed under this section which is taken by a public utility, an assignee, a financing party, a collection agent, or a party to an ancillary agreement; and any such action remains in full force and effect with respect to all securitization bonds issued or authorized in a financing order issued under this section before the date that such provision is held invalid or is invalidated, superseded, replaced, or repealed, or expires for any reason. (2019-244, s. 1; 2021-23, ss. 24, 25; 2025-78, s. 5.)

Article 9.

Acquisition and Condemnation of Property.

§ 62-180. Use of railroads and public highways.

Any person operating electric power, telegraph or telephone lines or authorized by law to establish such lines, has the right to construct, maintain and operate such lines along any railroad or public highway, but such lines shall be so constructed and maintained as not to obstruct or hinder unreasonably the usual travel on such railroad or highway. (1874-5, c. 203, s. 2; Code, s. 2007; 1899, c. 64, s. 1; 1903, c. 562; Rev., s. 1571; C.S., s. 1695; 1939, c. 228, s. 1; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-181. Electric and hydroelectric power companies may appropriate highways; conditions.

Every electric power or hydroelectric power corporation, person, firm or copartnership which may exercise the right of eminent domain under the Chapter Eminent Domain, where in the development of electric or hydroelectric power it shall become necessary to use or occupy any public highway, or any part of the same, after obtaining the consent of the public road authorities having supervision of such public highway, shall have power to appropriate said public highway for the development of electric or hydroelectric power: Provided, that said electric power or hydroelectric power corporation shall construct an equally good public highway, by a route to be selected by and subject to the approval and satisfaction of the public road authorities having supervision of such public highway: Provided further, that said company shall pay all damages to be assessed as provided by law, by the damming of water, the discontinuance of the road, and for the laying out of said new road. (1911, c. 114; C.S., s. 1696; 1939, c. 228, s. 2; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-182. Acquisition of right-of-way by contract.

Such telegraph, telephone, or electric power or lighting company has power to contract with any person or corporation, the owner of any lands or of any franchise or easement therein, over which its lines are proposed to be erected, for the right-of-way for planting, repairing and preservation of its poles or other property, and for the erection and occupation of offices at suitable distances for the public accommodation. This section shall not be construed as requiring electric power or lighting companies to erect offices for public accommodation. (1874-5, c. 203, s. 3; Code, s. 2008; 1899, c. 64; 1903, c. 562, ss. 1, 2; Rev., s. 1572; C.S., s. 1697; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-182.1. Access to dedicated public right-of-way.

When any map or plat of a subdivision, recorded as provided in G.S. 47-30 and G.S. 136-102.6, reflects the dedication of a public street or other public right-of-way, the dedicated public street or public right-of-way shall, upon recordation of the map or plat, become immediately available for use by any public utility, telephone membership corporation organized under G.S. 117-30, or cable television system to install, maintain, and operate lines, cables, or facilities for the provision of service to the public. No public utility, telephone membership corporation organized under G.S. 117-30, or cable television system shall place or erect any line, cable, or facility in, over, or upon a street or right-of-way in a subdivision that is intended to become a public street or public right-of-way, until a map or plat of the subdivision has been recorded as provided in G.S. 47-30 and G.S. 136-102.6, and except in accordance with procedures established by the Department of Transportation, Division of Highways, for accommodating utilities or cable television systems on highway rights-of-way. Upon recordation of a map or plat of a subdivision as provided in G.S. 47-30 and G.S. 136-102.6, no liability shall attach to the developer of the property as a result of any activity of a public utility, telephone membership corporation organized under G.S. 117-30, or cable television system occurring in the dedicated public street or public right-of-way. Nothing in this section shall relieve the developer of the property of responsibilities under G.S. 136-102.6. (2005-286, s. 1; 2006-259, s. 15.)

§ 62-183. Grant of eminent domain.

Such telegraph, telephone, electric power or lighting company shall be entitled, upon making just compensation therefor, to the right-of-way over the lands, privileges and easements of other persons and corporations, including rights-of-way for the construction, maintenance, and operation of pipelines for transporting fuel to their power plants; and to the right to erect poles and towers, to establish offices, and to take such lands as may be necessary for the establishment of their reservoirs, ponds, dams, works, railroads, or sidetracks, or powerhouses, with the right to divert the water from such ponds or reservoirs, and conduct the same by flume, ditch, conduit, waterway or pipeline, or in any other manner, to the point of use for the generation of power at its said powerhouses, returning said water to its proper channel after being so used. (1874-5, c. 203, s. 4; Code, s. 2009; 1899, c. 64; 1903, c. 562; Rev., s. 1573; 1907, c. 74; C.S., s. 1698; 1921, c. 115; 1923, c. 60; 1925, c. 175; 1957, c. 1046; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1981, c. 919, s. 2.)

§ 62-184. Dwelling house of owner, etc., may be taken under certain cases.

The dwelling house, yard, kitchen, garden or burial ground of the owner may be taken under G.S. 62-183 when the company alleges, and upon the proceedings to condemn makes it appear to the satisfaction of the court, that it owns or otherwise controls not less than seventy-five percent (75%) of the fall of the river or stream on which it proposes to erect its works, from the location of its proposed dam to the head of its pond or reservoir; or when the Commission, upon the petition filed by the company, shall, after due inquiry, so authorize. Nothing in this section repeals any part or feature of any private charter, but any firm or corporation acting under a private charter may operate under or adopt any feature of this section. (1907, c. 74; 1917, c. 108; C.S., s. 1699; 1933, c. 134, ss. 7, 8; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-185. Exercise of right of eminent domain; parties' interests only taken; no survey required.

When such telegraph, telephone, electric power or lighting company fails on application therefor to secure by contract or agreement such right-of-way for the purposes aforesaid over the lands, privilege or easement of another person or corporation; it may condemn the said interest through the procedures of the Chapter entitled Eminent Domain.

Only the interest of such parties as are brought before the court shall be condemned in any such proceedings, and if the right-of-way of a railroad or railway company sought to be condemned extends into or through more counties than one, the whole right and controversy may be heard and determined in one county into or through which such right-of-way extends.

It is not necessary for the petitioner to make any survey of or over the right-of-way, nor to file any map or survey thereof, nor to file any certificate of the location of its line by its board of directors. (1874-5, c. 203, s. 5; Code, s. 2010; 1899, c. 64, s. 2; 1903, c. 562; Rev., s. 1574; C.S., s. 1700; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1981, c. 919, s. 3.)

§ 62-186. Repealed by Session Laws 1981, c. 919, s. 4, effective January 1, 1982.

§ 62-187. Proceedings as under eminent domain.

The proceedings for the condemnation of lands, or any easement or interest therein, for the use of telegraph, telephone, electric power or lighting companies, the appraisal of the lands, or interest therein, the duty of the commissioners of appraisal, the right of either party to file exceptions, the report of commissioners, the mode and manner of appeal, the power and authority of the court or judge, the final judgment and the manner of its entry and enforcement, and the rights of the company pending the appeal, shall be as prescribed in Chapter 40A, the Chapter entitled Eminent Domain. (Code, s. 2012; 1899, c. 64; 1903, c. 562; Rev., s. 1576; C.S., s. 1702; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1981, c. 919, s. 5.)

§ 62-188. Repealed by Session Laws 1981, c. 919, s. 6, effective January 1, 1982.

§ 62-189. Powers granted corporations under Chapter exercisable by persons, firms or copartnerships.

All the rights, powers and obligations given, extended to, or that may be exercised by any corporation or incorporated company under this Chapter shall be extended to and likewise be exercised and are hereby granted unto all persons, firms or copartnerships engaged in or authorized by law to engage in the business herein described. Such persons, firms, copartnerships and corporations engaging in such business shall be subject to the provisions and requirements of the public laws which are applicable to others engaged in the same kind of business. (1939, c. 228, s. 3; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-190. Right of eminent domain conferred upon pipeline companies; other rights.

(a) Any pipeline company transporting or conveying natural gas, gasoline, crude oil, coal in suspension, or other fluid substances by pipeline for the public for compensation, and incorporated under the laws of the State, or foreign corporations domesticated under the laws of North Carolina, may exercise the right of eminent domain under the provisions of the Chapter, Eminent Domain, and for the purpose of constructing and maintaining its pipelines and other works shall have all the rights and powers given other corporations by this Chapter and acts amendatory thereof. Nothing herein shall prohibit any such pipeline company granted the right of eminent domain under the laws of this State from extending its pipelines from within this State into

another state for the purpose of transporting natural gas or coal in suspension into this State, nor to prohibit any such pipeline company from conveying or transporting natural gas, gasoline, crude oil, coal in suspension, or other fluid substances from within this State into another state. All such pipeline companies shall be deemed public utilities and shall be subject to regulation under the provisions of this Chapter.

(b) Liquid pipeline right-of-way must be selected to avoid, as far as practicable, areas containing private dwellings, industrial buildings, and places of assembly.

No liquid pipeline may be located within 50 feet of any private dwelling, or any industrial building or place of public assembly in which persons work, congregate, or assemble, unless it is provided with at least 12 inches of cover in addition to that prescribed in Part 195, Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations.

Any liquid pipeline installed underground must have at least 12 inches of clearance between the outside of the pipe and the extremity of any other underground structure, except that for drainage tile the minimum clearance may be less than 12 inches but not less than two inches. However, where 12 inches of clearance is impracticable, the clearance may be reduced if adequate provisions are made for corrosion control. (1937, c. 280; 1951, c. 1002, s. 3; 1957, c. 1045, s. 2; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1985, c. 696, s. 1; 1998-128, s. 8.)

§ 62-191. Flume companies exercising right of eminent domain become common carriers.

All flume companies availing themselves of the right of eminent domain under the provisions of the Chapter Eminent Domain shall become common carriers of freight, for the purpose for which they are adapted, and shall be under the direction, control and supervision of the Commission in the same manner and for the same purposes as is by law provided for other common carriers of freight. (1907, c. 39, s. 4; C.S., s. 3517; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97, § 5; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-192: Repealed by Session Laws 1998-128, s. 13.

§ 62-193. Disposition of certain unused easements.

(a) The underlying fee owner of land encumbered by any easement acquired by a utility company, whether acquired by purchase or by condemnation, on which construction has not been commenced by the utility company for the purpose for which the easement was acquired within 20 years of the date of acquisition, may file a complaint with the Commission for an order requiring the utility company to terminate the easement in exchange for payment by the underlying fee owner of the current fair market value of the easement.

(b) Upon receipt of the complaint, the Commission shall serve a copy of the complaint on each utility company named in the complaint, together with an order directing that the utility company file an answer to the complaint within 90 days after service.

(c) If the utility company agrees to terminate the easement, the utility company shall submit to the Commission, within the time allowed for answer, an original plus four copies of a statement of the utility company's agreement to terminate the easement.

(d) If the utility company does not agree that the easement should be terminated, the utility company may request a determination from the Commission as to whether the easement is necessary or advisable for the utility company's long-range needs for the provision of utilities to serve its service area, and whether termination of the easement would be contrary to the interests of the using and consuming public. The Commission may conduct a hearing on the matter, which

shall be conducted in accordance with Article 4 of this Chapter. Either party may appeal the Commission's decision in accordance with Article 5 of this Chapter. The burden of proof shall be on the utility company to show that the easement is necessary or advisable for the utility company's long-range needs for the provision of utilities to serve its service area and that termination of the easement would be contrary to the interests of the using and consuming public.

(e) If the underlying fee owner and the utility company cannot reach a mutually agreed upon fair market value of the easement, whether terminated voluntarily or by order of the Commission, the Commission shall make a request to the clerk of superior court in the county where the easement is located for the appointment of commissioners to determine the fair market value of the easement in accordance with the process set forth in G.S. 40A-48.

(f) If the Commission decides that the easement should not be terminated, the underlying fee owner may not file a complaint with the Commission under this section regarding the same easement for a period of five years from the date of the decision.

(g) For purposes of this section, the term "utility company" means a public utility as defined in G.S. 62-3(23), a municipality providing utility services, an authority organized under the North Carolina Water and Sewer Authorities Act, a sanitary district, a metropolitan water district, a metropolitan sewerage district, a metropolitan water and sewerage district, a county water and sewer district, or an electric or telephone membership corporation. (2020-18, s. 1(a).)

Article 10.

Transportation in General.

§ 62-200. Duty to transport household goods within a reasonable time.

(a) It shall be unlawful for any common carrier of household goods doing business in this State to omit or neglect to transport within a reasonable time any goods, merchandise or other articles of value received by it for shipment and billed to or from any place in this State, unless otherwise agreed upon between the carrier and the shipper, or unless the same be burned, stolen or otherwise destroyed, or unless otherwise provided by the Commission.

(b) Any common carrier violating any of the provisions of this section shall forfeit to the party aggrieved the sum of ten dollars ($10.00) for the first day and one dollar ($1.00) for each succeeding day of such unlawful detention or neglect, but the forfeiture shall not be collected for a period exceeding 30 days.

(c) In reckoning what is a reasonable time for such transportation, it shall be considered that such common carrier has transported household goods within a reasonable time if it has done so in the ordinary time required for transporting such articles by similar carriers between the receiving and shipping stations. The Commission is authorized to establish reasonable times for transportation by the various modes of carriage which shall be held to be prima facie reasonable, and a failure to transport within such times shall be held prima facie unreasonable. This section shall be construed to refer not only to delay in starting the household goods from the station where they are received, but to require the delivery at their destination within the time specified: Provided, that if such delay shall be due to causes which could not in the exercise of ordinary care have been foreseen or which were unavoidable, then upon the establishment of these facts to the satisfaction of the court trying the cause, the defendant common carrier shall be relieved from any penalty for delay in the transportation of household goods, but it shall not be relieved from the costs of such action. In all actions to recover penalties against a common carrier under this section, the burden of proof shall be upon such carrier to show where the delay, if any, occurred. The penalties

provided in this section shall be in addition to the damages recoverable for failure to transport within a reasonable time.

(d) This section shall not apply to motor carriers of passengers. (Code, s. 1964; 1899, c. 164, s. 2, subsecs. 2, 7; 1903, c. 444; c. 590, s. 3; c. 693; 1905, c. 545; Rev., ss. 1094, 2631, 2632; 1907, cc. 217, 461; C.S., ss. 1053, 3515, 3516; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1995, c. 523, s. 11; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 742, s. 33; 1998-128, s. 9.)

§ 62-201. Freight charges to be at legal rates; penalty for failure to deliver to consignee on tender of same.

All common carriers doing business in this State shall settle their freight charges according to the rate stipulated in the bill of lading, provided the rate therein stipulated be in conformity with the classifications and rates made and filed with the North Carolina Utilities Commission in the case of intrastate shipments, by which classifications and rates all consignees shall in all cases be entitled to settle freight charges with such carriers; and it shall be the duty of such common carriers to inform any consignee of the correct amount due for freight according to such classification and rates. Upon payment or tender of the amount due on any shipment which has arrived at its destination according to such classification and rates, such common carrier shall deliver the freight in question to the consignee. Any failure or refusal to comply with the provisions hereof shall subject such carrier so failing or refusing to liability for actual damages plus a penalty of fifty dollars ($50.00) for each such failure or refusal, to be recovered by any consignee aggrieved by a suit in a court of competent jurisdiction. Provided, however, that this section shall not apply to motor carriers of passengers. (1905, c. 330, s. 1; Rev., s. 2633; C.S., s. 3518; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97, s. 5; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-202. Baggage and freight to be carefully handled.

All common carriers shall handle with care all baggage and freight placed with them for transportation, and they shall be liable in damages for any and all injuries to the baggage or freight of persons from whom they have collected fare or charged freight while the same is under their control. Upon proof of injury to baggage or freight in the possession or under the control of any such carrier, it shall be presumed that the injury was caused by the negligence of the carrier. This section shall not apply to motor carriers of passengers. (1897, c. 46; Rev., s. 2624; C.S., s. 3523; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-203. Claims for loss or damage to goods; filing and adjustment.

(a) Every common carrier receiving household goods for transportation in intrastate commerce shall issue a bill of lading therefor, and shall be liable to the lawful holder thereof for any loss, damage, or injury to such household goods caused by it, or by any carrier participating in the haul when transported on a through bill of lading, and any such carrier delivering said household goods so received and transported shall be liable to the lawful holder of said bill of lading or to any party entitled to recover thereon for such loss, damage, or injury, notwithstanding any contract or agreement to the contrary; provided, however, the Commission may, by regulation or order, authorize or require any such common carrier to establish and maintain rates related to the value of shipments declared in writing by the shipper, or agreed upon as the release value of such shipments, such declaration or agreement to have no effect other than to limit liability and recovery to an amount not exceeding the value so declared or released, in which case, any tariff filed pursuant to such regulation or order shall specifically refer thereto; provided further, that a rate

shall be afforded the shipper covering the full value of the goods shipped; provided further, that nothing in this section shall deprive any lawful holder of such bill of lading of any remedy or right of action which such holder has under existing law; provided further, that the carrier issuing such bill of lading, or delivering such household goods so received and transported, shall be entitled to recover from the carrier on whose route the loss, damage, or injury shall have been sustained the amount it may be required to pay to the owners of such property.

(b) Every claim for loss of or damage to household goods while in possession of a common carrier shall be adjusted and paid within 90 days after the filing of such claim with the agent of such carrier at the point of destination of such shipment, or point of delivery to another common carrier, by the consignee or at the point of origin by the consignor, when it shall appear that the consignee was the owner of the shipment: Provided, that no such claim shall be filed until after the arrival of the shipment, or some part thereof, at the point of destination, or until after the lapse of a reasonable time for the arrival thereof.

(c) In every case such common carrier shall be liable for the amount of such loss or damage, together with interest thereon from the date of the filing of the claim therefor until the payment thereof. Failure to adjust and pay such claim within the periods respectively herein prescribed shall subject each common carrier so failing to a penalty of fifty dollars ($50.00) for each and every such failure, to be recovered by any consignee aggrieved (or consignor, when it shall appear that the consignor was the owner of the property at the time of shipment and at the time of suit, and is, therefore, the party aggrieved), in any court of competent jurisdiction: Provided, that unless such consignee or consignor recover in such action the full amount claimed, no penalty shall be recovered, but only the actual amount of the loss or damage, with interest as aforesaid; and that no penalty shall be recoverable under the provisions of this section where claims have been filed by both the consignor and consignee, unless the time herein provided has elapsed after the withdrawal of one of the claims.

(d) A check shall be affixed to every parcel of baggage when taken for transportation by the agent or servant of a common carrier, if there is a handle, loop or fixture so that the same can be attached upon the parcel or baggage so offered for transportation, and a duplicate thereof given to the passenger or person delivering the same on his behalf. If such check be refused on demand, the common carrier shall pay to such passenger the sum of ten dollars ($10.00), to be recovered in a civil action; and further, no fare or toll shall be collected or received from such passenger, and if such passenger shall have paid his fare the same shall be refunded by the carrier.

(e) If a passenger, whose bag has been checked, shall produce the check and his baggage shall not be delivered to him, he may by an action recover the value of such baggage.

(f) Causes of action for the recovery of the possession of the property shipped, for loss or damage thereto, and for the penalties herein provided for, may be united in the same complaint.

(g) This section shall not deprive any consignee or consignor of any other rights or remedies existing against common carriers in regard to freight charges or claims for loss or damage to freight, but shall be deemed and held as creating an additional liability upon such common carriers.

(h) This section shall not apply to motor carriers of passengers and only subsection (a) of this section shall apply to motor carriers of property. (1871-2, c. 138, s. 36; Code, s. 1970; 1905, c. 330, ss. 2, 4, 5; Rev., ss. 2623, 2634, 2635; 1907, c. 983; 1911, c. 139; C.S., ss. 3510, 3524, 3525; 1947, c. 781; c. 1008, s. 27; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1995, c. 523, s. 12.)

§ 62-204. Notice of claims, statute of limitations for loss, damage or injury to property.

Any claim for loss, damage or injury to property while in the possession of a common carrier shall be filed by the claimant with the carrier in writing within nine months after the same occurred, and the cause of action with respect thereto shall be deemed to have accrued at the expiration of 30 days after the date of such notice, and action for the recovery thereon may be commenced immediately thereafter or at any time within two years after notice in writing shall have been given to the claimant by the adverse party that the claim or any part thereof specified in such notice has been disallowed, and neither party shall by rule, regulation, contract, or otherwise, provide for a shorter time for filing such claims or for commencing actions thereon than the period set out in this section. Provided, however, that this section shall not apply to motor carriers of passengers. (1947, c. 1008, s. 21; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-205. Joinder of causes of action.

To expedite the settlement of claims between shippers and common carriers, a shipper may join in the same complaint against a common carrier any number of claims for overcharges, or a common carrier may join in the same complaint any number of claims against a shipper for undercharges, whether such claims arose at the same time or in the course of shipments at different times; provided, that each such claim shall be so identified that the same and the allegations with respect thereto may be distinguished from other claims so joined in the complaint, and in cases in which the right of subrogation may be invoked the judgment shall specify the amount of recovery, if any, on each such claim. For the purpose of jurisdiction under this section the aggregate amount set out in the complaint shall be deemed the sum in controversy. Provided, however, that this section shall not apply to motor carriers of passengers. (1947, c. 1008, s. 20; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-206. Carrier's right against prior carrier.

Any common carrier shall have all the rights and remedies herein provided for against a common carrier from which it received the household goods in question. Provided, however, that this section shall not apply to motor carriers of passengers. (1905, c. 330, s. 3; Rev., s. 2636; C.S., s. 3526; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1995, c. 523, s. 13.)

§ 62-207: Repealed by Session Laws 1998-128, s. 13.

§ 62-208. Common carriers to settle promptly for cash-on-delivery shipments; penalty.

Every common carrier which shall fail to make settlement with the consignor of a cash-on-delivery shipment, either by payment of the moneys stipulated to be collected upon the delivery of the articles so shipped or by the return to such consignor of the article so shipped, within 20 days after demand made by the consignor and payment or tender of payment by him of the lawful charges for transportation, shall forfeit and pay to such consignor a penalty of twenty-five dollars ($25.00), where the value of the shipment is twenty-five dollars ($25.00) or less; and, where the value of the shipment is over twenty-five dollars ($25.00), a penalty equal to the value of the shipment; the penalty not to exceed fifty dollars ($50.00) in any case: Provided, no penalty shall be collectible where the shipment, through no act of negligence of the common carrier is burned, stolen or otherwise destroyed: Provided further, that the penalties here named shall be cumulative and shall not be in derogation of any right the consignor may have under any other provision of law to recover of the common carrier damages for the loss of any cash-on-delivery shipment or for negligent delay in handling the same. Provided, however, that this section shall not apply to motor carriers of passengers. (1909, c. 866; C.S., s. 3530; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-209. Sale of unclaimed baggage or household goods; notice; sale of rejected property; escheat.

(a) Any common carrier which has had in its possession on hand at any destination in this State any article whether baggage or household goods, for a period of 60 days from its arrival at destination, which said carrier cannot deliver because unclaimed, may at the expiration of said 60 days sell the same at public auction at any point where in the opinion of the carrier the best price can be obtained: Provided, however, that notice of such sale shall be mailed to the consignor and consignee, by registered or certified mail, if known to such carrier, not less than 15 days before such sale shall be made; or if the name and address of the consignor and consignee cannot with reasonable diligence be ascertained by such carrier, notice of the sale shall be published once a week for two consecutive weeks in some newspaper of general circulation published at the point of sale: Provided, that if there is no such paper published at such point, the publication may be made in any paper having a general circulation in the State: Provided further, however, that if the nondelivery of said article is due to the consignee's and consignor's rejection of it, then such article may be sold by the carrier at public or private sale, and at such time and place as will in the carrier's judgment net the best price, and this without further notice to either consignee or consignor, and without the necessity of publication.

(b) Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 523, s. 14.

(c) The common carrier shall keep a record of the articles sold and of the prices obtained therefor, and shall, after deducting all charges and the expenses of the sale, including advertisement, if advertised, pay the balance to the owner of such articles on demand therefor made at any time within five years from the date of the sale. If no person shall claim the surplus within five years, such surplus shall be paid to the Escheat Fund of the Department of State Treasurer.

(d) This section shall not apply to motor carriers of passengers. (1871-2, c. 138, s. 50; Code, s. 1987; Rev., s. 2639; 1921, c. 124, ss. 1, 2, 3; C.S., s. 3534; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1981, c. 531, s. 17; 1995, c. 523, s. 14.)

§ 62-210. Discrimination between connecting lines.

All common carriers subject to the provisions of this Chapter shall afford all reasonable, proper and equal facilities for the interchange of traffic between their respective lines and for the forwarding and delivering of passengers and freight to and from their several lines and those connecting therewith, and shall not discriminate in their rates, routes and charges against such connecting lines, and shall be required to make as close connection as practicable for the convenience of the traveling public. Common carriers shall obey all rules and regulations made by the Commission relating to trackage. Irregular route motor carriers shall interchange traffic only with the approval of the Commission. Provided, however, that this section shall not apply to motor carriers of passengers. (1899, c. 164, s. 21; Rev., s. 1088; C.S., s. 1107; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1935, c. 258; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-211: Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 523, s. 15.

§ 62-212. Indemnity agreements in motor carrier transportation contracts.

(a) A provision, clause, covenant, or agreement contained in, collateral to, or affecting a motor carrier transportation contract that purports to indemnify, defend, or hold harmless, or has the effect of indemnifying, defending, or holding harmless the promisee from or against any

liability for loss or damage resulting from the negligence or intentional acts or omission of the promisee is against the public policy of this State and is void and unenforceable.

(b) The following definitions apply in this section:

(1) Motor carrier transportation contract. – A contract, agreement, or understanding covering at least one of the following:

a. The transportation of property for compensation or hire by the motor carrier.

b. Entrance on property by the motor carrier for the purpose of loading, unloading, or transporting property for compensation or hire.

c. A service incidental to activity described in sub-subdivision a. or b. of this subdivision, including storage of property.

(2) Promisee. – The person with whom the motor carrier enters into a motor carrier transportation contract and any agents, employees, servants, or independent contractors who are directly responsible to that person, except for motor carriers party to a motor carrier transportation contract with the person, and the motor carrier's agents, employees, servants, or independent contractors directly responsible to the motor carrier.

(c) Nothing contained in this section affects a provision, clause, covenant, or agreement where the motor carrier indemnifies or holds harmless the contract's promisee against liability for damages to the extent that the damages were caused by and resulted from the negligence of the motor carrier, its agents, employees, servants, or independent contractors who are directly responsible to the motor carrier.

(d) Notwithstanding the other provisions contained in this section, the term "motor carrier transportation contract", as defined in this section, shall not include the Uniform Intermodal Interchange and Facilities Access Agreement administered by the Intermodal Association of North America, or other agreements providing for the interchange, use or possession of intermodal chassis, containers, trailers, or other intermodal equipment that contain substantially the same indemnity provision as the provision contained in the Uniform Intermodal Interchange and Facilities Access Agreement. (2005-185, s. 1; 2006-264, s. 45.5(a).)

§§ 62-213 through 62-219. Reserved for future codification purposes.

Article 11.

Railroads.

§ 62-220: Recodified as § 136-190 by Session Laws 1998-128, s. 14.

§§ 62-221 through 62-222: Repealed by Session Laws 1998-128, s. 13.

§§ 62-223 through 62-226: Recodified as §§ 136-191 through 136-194 by Session Laws 1998-128, s. 14.

§§ 62-227 through 62-234: Repealed by Session Laws 1998-128, s. 13.

§ 62-235: Repealed by Session Laws 1995 (Regular Session, 1996), c. 673, s. 3.

§ 62-236: Recodified as § 136-20.1 by Session Laws 1995 (Regular Session, 1996), c. 673, s. 5.

§ 62-237: Recodified as G.S. 136-195 by Session Laws 1998-128, s. 14, effective September 4, 1998.

§§ 62-238 through 62-239: Repealed by Session Laws 1998-128, s. 13.

§ 62-240: Recodified as § 136-196 by Session Laws 1998-128, s. 14.

§§ 62-241 through 62-247: Repealed by Session Laws 1998-128, s. 13.

§§ 62-248 through 62-258. Reserved for future codification purposes.

Article 12.

Motor Carriers.

§ 62-259. Additional declaration of policy for motor carriers.

In addition to the declaration of policy set forth in G.S. 62-2 of Article 1 of Chapter 62, it is declared the policy of the State of North Carolina to preserve and continue all motor carrier transportation services now afforded this State; and to provide fair and impartial regulations of motor carriers in the use of the public highways in such a manner as to promote, in the interest of the public, the inherent advantages of highway transportation; to promote and preserve adequate economical and efficient service to all the communities of the State by motor carriers; to encourage and promote harmony among all carriers and to prevent discrimination, undue preferences or advantages, or unfair or destructive competitive practices between all carriers; to foster a coordinated statewide motor carrier service; and to conform with the national transportation policy and the federal motor carriers acts insofar as the same may be practical and adequate for application to intrastate commerce. The provisions of this section and these policies are applicable to bus companies and their rates and services only to the extent with which they are consistent with the provisions of G.S. 62-259.1 and of the Bus Regulatory Reform Act of 1985. (1947, c. 1008, s. 1; 1949, c. 1132, s. 2; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1985, c. 676, s. 16.)

§ 62-259.1. Specific declaration of policy for bus companies.

The transportation of passengers, their baggage and express, by bus companies has become increasingly subject to competition from other forms of transportation which are unregulated or only partially regulated as to rates and services. It is in the public interest and it is the policy of this State that bus companies be partially deregulated so that they may rely upon competitive market forces to determine the best quality, variety and price of bus services, thereby promoting the public health, safety and welfare by strengthening and increasing the viability of this necessary form of transportation. (1985, c. 676, s. 17.)

§ 62-260. Exemptions from regulations.

(a) Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to include persons and vehicles engaged in one or more of the following services by motor vehicle if not engaged at the time in the transportation of other passengers or other property by motor vehicle for compensation:

(1) Transportation of passengers or household goods for or under the control of the State of North Carolina, or any political subdivision thereof, or any board,

department or commission of the State, or any institution owned and supported by the State;

(2) Transportation of passengers by taxicabs when not carrying more than fifteen passengers or transportation by other motor vehicles performing bona fide taxicab service and not carrying more than fifteen passengers in a single vehicle at the same time when such taxicab or other vehicle performing bona fide taxicab service is not operated on a regular route or between termini; provided, no taxicab while operating over the regular route of a common carrier outside of a municipality and a residential and commercial zone adjacent thereto, as such zone may be determined by the Commission as provided in subdivision (8) of this subsection, shall solicit passengers along such route, but nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit a taxicab operator from picking up passengers along such route upon call, sign or signal from prospective passengers;

(3) Transportation by motor vehicles owned or operated by or on behalf of hotels while used exclusively for the transportation of hotel patronage between hotels and local railroad or other common carrier stations;

(4) Transportation of passengers to and from airports and passenger airline terminals when such transportation is incidental to transportation by aircraft;

(5) Transportation of passengers by trolley buses operated by electric power derived from a fixed overhead wire, furnishing local passenger transportation similar to street railway service;

(6) Transportation by motor vehicles used exclusively for the transportation of passengers to or from religious services or transportation of pupils and employees to and from private or parochial schools or transportation to and from functions for students and employees of private or parochial schools;

(7) Transportation of any bona fide employees to and from their place(s) of regular employment;

(8) Transportation of passengers when the movement is within a municipality exclusively, or within contiguous municipalities and within a residential and commercial zone adjacent to and a part of such municipality or contiguous municipalities; provided, the Commission shall have power in its discretion, in any particular case, to fix the limits of any such zone;

(9) through (17) Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 523, s. 16.

(18) Charter parties, as defined by this subdivision when such charter party is sponsored or organized by, and used by, any organized senior citizen group whose members are sixty (60) years of age or older. Such charter party shall be subject to subsections (f) and (g) of this section. "Charter party", for the purpose of this subdivision, means a group of persons who, pursuant to a common purpose and under a single contract, and at a fixed charge for the vehicle, have acquired the exclusive use of a passenger-carrying motor vehicle to travel together as a group from a point of origin to a specified destination or for a particular itinerary, either agreed upon in advance or modified by the chartering group after having left the place of origin.

(b) The Commission shall have jurisdiction to fix rates of carriers of passengers operating as described in (5) and (8) of subsection (a) of this section in the manner provided in this Chapter, and shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine controversies with respect to extensions and

services, and the Commission's rules of practice shall include appropriate provisions for bringing such controversies before the Commission and for the hearing and determination of the same; provided nothing in this paragraph shall include taxicabs.

(c) The Commission may conduct investigations to determine whether any person purporting to operate under the exemption provisions of this section is, in fact, so operating, and make such orders as it deems necessary to enforce compliance with this section.

(d) The venue for any action commenced to enforce compliance with the terms of this Article against any person purporting to operate under any of the exemptions provided in this section shall be in one of the counties of the superior court district or set of districts as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1 wherein the violation is alleged to have taken place and such person shall be entitled to trial by jury.

(e) None of the provisions of this section nor any of the provisions of this Chapter shall be construed so as to prohibit or regulate the transportation of property by any motor carrier when the movement is within a municipality or within contiguous municipalities and within a zone adjacent to and commercially a part of such municipality or contiguous municipalities, as defined by the Commission. The Commission shall have the power in its discretion, in any particular case, to fix the limits of any such zone. Nothing herein shall be construed as an abridgment of the police powers of any municipality over such operation wholly within any such municipality. Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to prohibit or regulate the transportation of household effects of families from one residence to another by persons who do not hold themselves out as being, and are not generally engaged in the business of transporting such property for compensation.

(f) Notwithstanding the exemption for transportation of passengers and household goods provided under subsections (a) through (e) of this section, all motor carriers transporting passengers for compensation under said exemptions or under any special exemptions granted by the Utilities Commission under G.S. 62-261 shall be subject to the same requirements for security for protection of the public as are established for regulated motor common carriers by the rules of the Utilities Commission pursuant to G.S. 62-268, and all such motor carriers transporting for hire under said exemption provisions shall further be subject to the same requirements for safety of operation of said motor vehicles as are required of regulated motor common carriers under the provisions of Chapter 20 and the regulations of the Division adopted pursuant thereto. The Division is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations for the enforcement of said requirements in the case of all such exempt operations, and the officers and agents of the Division shall have full authority to inspect said exempt vehicles and to apply all enforcement regulations and penalties for violation of said security regulations and safety regulations as in the case of regulated motor carriers.

(g) The owners of all motor vehicles used in any transportation for compensation which is declared to be exempt under this section shall register such operation with the Division of Motor Vehicles and shall secure from the Division of Motor Vehicles a certificate of exemption. (1947, c. 1008, s. 4; 1949, c. 1132, s. 5; 1951, c. 987, s. 1; 1953, c. 1140, s. 2; 1955, c. 1194, ss. 1, 2; 1959, c. 102, c. 639, s. 15; 1963, c. 1165, c. 1; 1967, cc. 1135, 1203; 1969, c. 681; 1971, cc. 856, 1192; 1973, c. 175; 1977, c. 217; 1979, c. 204, s. 1; 1985, c. 454, ss. 9-11; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 94; 1995, c. 523, s. 16.)

§ 62-261. Additional powers and duties of Commission applicable to motor vehicles.

The Commission is hereby vested with the following powers and duties:

(1) To supervise and regulate bus companies and to that end, the Commission may establish reasonable requirements with respect to continuous and adequate service, transportation of baggage, newspapers, mail and light express, uniform system of accounts, records and reports and preservation of records.

(2) To supervise the operation and safety of passenger bus stations in any manner necessary to promote harmony among the carriers using such stations and efficiency of service to the traveling public.

(3) Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 454, s. 12.

(4) For the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Article, the Utilities Commission may avail itself of the special information of the Board of Transportation in promulgating safety requirements and in considering applications for certificates or permits with particular reference to conditions of the public highway or highways involved, and the ability of the said public highway or highways to carry added traffic; and the Board of Transportation, upon request of the Utilities Commission, shall furnish such information.

(5) The Commission may, without prior notice and hearing, make and enter any order, rule, regulation, or requirement, not affecting rates, upon unanimous finding by the Commission of the existence of an emergency and make such order, rule, regulation or requirement effective upon notice given to each affected motor carrier by registered mail, or by certified mail pending a hearing thereon as provided in this subdivision. It shall not be necessary for the Commission to give notice to the carriers affected or to hold a hearing prior to a revision in the rules regarding procedures to be followed in filing rates. Any such emergency order, rule, regulation or requirement shall be subject to continuation, modification, change, or revocation after notice and hearing and all such emergency orders, rules, regulations and requirements shall be supplanted and superseded by any final order, rule, regulation or requirement entered by the Commission.

(6) The Commission shall regulate brokers and make and enforce reasonable requirements respecting their licenses, financial responsibility, accounts, records, reports, operations and practices.

(7) Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 454, s. 12.

(8) To determine, upon its own motion, or upon motion by a motor carrier, or any other party in interest, whether the transportation of household goods in intrastate commerce performed by any motor carrier or class of motor carriers lawfully engaged in operation in this State is in fact of such nature, character, or quantity as not substantially to affect or impair uniform regulation by the Commission of transportation by motor carriers engaged in intrastate commerce. Upon so finding, the Commission shall issue a certificate of exemption to such motor carrier or class of motor carriers which, during the period such certificate shall remain effective and unrevoked, shall exempt such carrier or class of motor carriers from compliance with the provisions of this Article, and shall attach to such certificate such reasonable terms and conditions as the public interest may require. At any time after the issuance of any such certificate of exemption, the Commission may by order revoke all or any part thereof, if it shall find that the transportation in intrastate commerce performed

by the carrier or class of carriers designated in such certificate will be, or shall have become, or is reasonably likely to become, or such nature, character, or quantity as in fact substantially to affect or impair uniform regulation by the Commission of intrastate transportation by motor carriers in effectuating the policy declared in this Chapter. Upon revocation of any such certificate, the Commission shall restore to the carrier or carriers affected thereby, without further proceedings, the authority, if any, to operate in intrastate commerce held by such carrier or carriers at the time the certificate of exemption pertaining to such carrier or carriers became effective. No certificate of exemption shall be denied, and no order of revocation shall be issued, under this paragraph, except after reasonable opportunity for hearing to interested parties.

(9) To inquire into the management of the business of motor carriers and into the management of business of persons controlling, controlled by or under common control with, motor carriers to the extent that such persons have a pecuniary interest in the business of one or more motor carriers, and the Commission shall keep itself informed as to the manner and method in which the same are conducted, and may obtain from such carriers and persons such information as the Commission deems necessary to carry out the provisions of this Article.

(10) Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 454, s. 12.

(11) The Commission may from time to time establish such just and reasonable classifications of groups of carriers included in the term "common carrier by motor vehicle" as the special nature of the service performed by such carriers shall require; and such just and reasonable rules, regulations, and requirements, consistent with the provisions of this Article, to be observed by such carriers so classified or grouped, as the Commission deems necessary or desirable in the public interest. (1947, c. 1008, s. 5; 1949, c. 1132, s. 6; 1953, c. 1140, s. 5; 1957, c. 65, s. 11; c. 1152, s. 7; 1961, c. 472, s. 9; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1969, c. 723, s. 2; c. 763; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; 1985, c. 454, s. 12; c. 676, s. 18; 1995, c. 523, s. 17.)

§ 62-262. Applications and hearings other than for bus companies.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in G.S. 62-260[,] G.S. 62-262.1 and 62-265, no person shall engage in the transportation of passengers or household goods in intrastate commerce unless such person shall have applied to and obtained from the Commission a certificate authorizing such operations, and it shall be unlawful for any person knowingly or wilfully to operate in intrastate commerce in any manner contrary to the provisions of this Article, or of the rules and regulations of the Commission. No certificate shall be amended so as to enlarge or in any manner extend the scope of operations of a motor carrier without complying with the provisions of this section.

(b) Upon the filing of an application for a certificate, the Commission shall, within a reasonable time, fix a time and place for hearing such application. The Commission shall from time to time prepare a truck calendar containing notice of such hearings, a copy of which shall be mailed to the applicant and to any other persons desiring it, upon payment of charges to be fixed by the Commission. The notice or calendar herein required shall be mailed at least 20 days prior to the date fixed for the hearing, but the failure of any person, other than applicant, to receive such notice or calendar shall not, for that reason, invalidate the action of the Commission in granting or denying the application.

(c) The Commission may, in its discretion, except where a regular calendar providing notice is issued, require the applicant to give notice of the time and place of such hearing together with a brief description of the purpose of said hearing and the exact route or routes and authority applied for, to be published not less than once each week for two successive weeks in one or more newspapers of general circulation in the territory proposed to be served. The Commission may in its discretion require the applicant to give such other and further notice in the form and manner prescribed by the Commission to the end that all interested parties and the general public may have full knowledge of such hearing and its purpose. If the Commission requires the applicant to give notice by publication, then a copy of such notice shall be immediately mailed by the applicant to the Commission, and upon receipt of same the chief clerk shall cause the copy of notice to be entered in the Commission's docket of pending proceedings. The applicant shall, prior to any hearing upon his application, be required to satisfy the Commission that such notice by publication has been duly made, and in addition to any other fees or costs required to be paid by the applicant, the applicant shall pay into the office of the Commission the cost of the notices herein required to be mailed by the Commission.

(d) Any motor carrier desiring to protest the granting of an application for a certificate, in whole, or in part, may become a party to such proceedings by filing with the Commission, not less than 10 days prior to the date fixed for the hearing, unless the time be extended by order of the Commission, its protest in writing under oath, containing a general statement of the grounds for such protest and the manner in which the protestant will be adversely affected by the granting of the application in whole or in part. Such protestant may also set forth in his protest its proposal, if any, to render either alone or in conjunction with other motor carriers, the service proposed by the applicant, either in whole or in part. Upon the filing of such protest it shall be the duty of the protestant to file three copies with the Commission, and the protestant shall certify that a copy of said protest has been delivered or mailed to the applicant or applicant's attorney. When no protest is filed with the Commission within the time herein limited, or as extended by order of the Commission, the Commission may proceed to decide the application on the basis of testimony taken at a hearing, or on the basis of information contained in the application and sworn affidavits, and make the necessary findings of fact and issue or decline to issue the certificate applied for without further notice. Persons other than motor carriers shall have the right to appear before the Commission and give evidence in favor of or against the granting of any application and with permission of the Commission may be accorded the right to examine and cross-examine witnesses.

(e) The burden of proof shall be upon the applicant for a certificate to show to the satisfaction of the Commission:

(1) That public convenience and necessity require the proposed service in addition to existing authorized transportation service, and

(2) That the applicant is fit, willing and able to properly perform the proposed service, and

(3) That the applicant is solvent and financially able to furnish adequate service on a continuing basis.

(f) to (h) Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 676, s. 19.

(i), (j) Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 523, s. 18.

(k) The Commission shall by general order, or rule, having regard for the public convenience and necessity, provide for the abandonment or permanent or temporary discontinuance of transportation service previously authorized in a certificate.

(l) The provisions of this section shall not be applicable to applications for certificates of authority by bus companies or related hearings. (1947, c. 1008, s. 11; 1949, c. 1132, s. 10; 1953, c. 825, s. 3; 1957, c. 1152, ss. 8, 9; 1959, c. 639, s. 11; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1965, c. 214; 1981, c. 193, s. 4; 1985, c. 676, s. 19; 1995, c. 523, s. 18.)

§ 62-262.1. Certificates of authority for passenger operations by bus companies.

(a) Except as provided in G.S. 62-260, 62-262 and 62-265, no person shall engage in the transportation of passengers in intrastate commerce by motor vehicle without having applied for and obtained a certificate authorizing those operations from the Commission. It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly or willfully operate in intrastate commerce in a manner contrary to the provisions of this Article or to the rules and regulations of the Commission. No certificate shall be amended to enlarge, or in any manner extend, the scope of operations of a bus company without complying with the provisions of this section.

(b) Any bus company desiring a certificate of authority to operate in intrastate commerce in this State over fixed routes, or to enlarge or in any manner extend the scope of its fixed route operations previously granted by the Commission, may do so by filing a verified application with the Commission and by paying the filing fee established by G.S. 62-300.

(c) The Commission shall issue a certificate of authority to an applicant for the transportation of passengers over a fixed route or to enlarge or extend authority previously granted, if the Commission finds that the applicant is fit, willing and able to provide the transportation to be authorized by the certificate and to comply with the provisions of this Chapter, unless the Commission finds, on the basis of evidence presented by any person objecting to the issuance of the certificate, that the transportation to be authorized is not consistent with the public interest.

(d) In making any findings relating to public interest under subsection (c) of this section, the Commission shall consider, to the extent applicable, (i) the transportation policy of this State as it relates to bus companies under G.S. 62-259.1 and this Chapter; (ii) the value of competition to the traveling and shipping public; (iii) the effect of issuance of the certificate on bus company service to small communities; and (iv) whether issuance of the certificate would impair the ability of any other fixed route carrier of passengers to provide a substantial portion of its fixed route passenger service, except that diversion of revenue or traffic from a fixed route carrier of passengers, alone, shall not be sufficient to support a finding that issuance of the certificate would impair the ability of the carrier to provide a substantial portion of its fixed route passenger service.

(e) Within 10 days after the filing of an application, the applicant shall provide notice to be given as required by Commission rule. If no protest, raising material issues of fact to the granting of the application, is filed with the Commission within 30 days after the notice is given, the Commission may, upon review of the record and without a hearing, issue its certificate of authority granting the requested operating authority, if it is satisfied that the applicant meets the requirements set forth in subsection (c) of this section.

(f) If protests are filed raising material issues of fact to the granting of the application, the Commission shall set the application for hearing, as soon as possible, and cause notice to be given as provided by its rules. At the hearing, the only issues for consideration are those set forth in subsections (c) and (d) of this section. The Commission shall issue its final order not later than 180 days after the application is filed.

(g) Any bus company authorized to transport passengers in intrastate commerce over fixed routes in this State and which in fact provides that service may, without filing a new application or paying further fees: (i) transport newspapers, express parcels or United States mail over the fixed

routes on which it provides passenger transportation; (ii) provide charter operations to all points in the State; and (iii) transport charter passengers in the same motor vehicles with fixed route passengers.

(h) Any bus company seeking a certificate to engage solely in charter operations within the State, or to enlarge or in any manner extend the scope of its charter operations previously granted by the Commission, may obtain one by (i) filing a verified application for the authority with the Commission; (ii) paying the applicable filing fee as prescribed by G.S. 62-300; and (iii) demonstrating that it is fit, willing and able to perform the proposed charter operations.

(i) Within 10 days after filing of an application for charter operations, the applicant shall provide notice as required by Commission rule or regulation. If no protests to the granting of the application, raising material issues of fact, are received by the Commission within 30 days after the notice is given, the Commission shall issue its certificate granting the requested authority unless it determines that the applicant is unfit, unwilling or unable to perform the proposed operations. In the event of this determination, or if protests to the proposed operation raising material issues of fact are received, the Commission shall set the application for hearing, as soon as possible, and provide notice to be given as provided by its rules and shall issue its final order within 180 days after application is filed. At the hearing, the only issue for consideration shall be whether the applicant is fit, willing and able to perform the proposed charter operations and the issue of need shall not be considered. On the issue of its fitness, willingness and ability to perform the proposed charter operations, the applicant in its application and at any hearing shall present evidence from which the Commission may find that: (i) the applicant has sufficient assets to perform properly the proposed operations; (ii) the operation will be conducted only with properly qualified drivers; (iii) the applicant will maintain safe, clean and attractive buses and equipment; (iv) the applicant will maintain insurance for the protection of the public as provided in this Chapter; (v) the applicant has sufficient equipment to conduct the proposed operation; and (vi) the applicant will observe all applicable laws, rules and regulations of this State.

(j) Any bus company authorized and engaged solely in charter operations shall not be required to transport passengers over a fixed route in this State as an incidence to its charter operations. (1985, c. 676, s. 20.)

§ 62-262.2. Discontinuance or reduction in service.

(a) When a bus company proposes to discontinue service over any intrastate route or proposes to reduce its level of service to any points on a route to a level which is less than one trip per day (excluding Saturdays and Sundays), it shall petition the Commission for permission to do so. Within 10 days after the filing of a petition, the Commission shall require notice to be given.

(b) Any person or the Public Staff may object, to the Commission, to the granting of permission to any bus company to discontinue or reduce transportation under this section. If neither objects to the granting of permission to discontinue or reduce service under this section, within 30 days after the notice as required by subsection (a) of this section, the Commission may grant the permission based on the record and without hearing.

(c) If, within 30 days after the notice as required by subsection (a) of this section, any person or the Public Staff objects in writing to the Commission to granting of such permission, the Commission shall grant such permission unless the Commission finds as a fact, that the discontinuance or reduction in service is not consistent with the public interest or that continuing the transportation, without the proposed discontinuance or reduction, will not constitute an unreasonable burden on interstate commerce. In making a finding under this subsection, the

Commission shall accord great weight to the extent to which the interstate and intrastate revenues from the transportation proposed to be reduced or discontinued are less than the variable costs of providing the transportation, including depreciation for revenue equipment. The Commission may also consider, to the extent applicable, all other factors which are to be considered by the Interstate Commerce Commission in a proceeding commenced under 49 U.S.C. § 10935. For the purposes of this section, the bus company filing a petition for permission to discontinue or reduce service shall have the burden of proving (i) the amount of its interstate and intrastate revenues received for transportation to, from or between, but not through, points on the involved intrastate route; and (ii) the system variable costs of providing the transportation.

(d) The Commission may make its determination with or without a public hearing. The Commission shall take final action upon the petition not later than 120 days after any written objections to the petition are filed.

(e) The provisions of G.S. 62-262(k) shall not be applicable to bus companies. (1985, c. 676, s. 21; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1024, s. 15.)

§ 62-263. Application for broker's license.

(a) No person shall engage in the business of a broker in intrastate operations within this State unless such person holds a broker's license issued by the Commission.

(b) The Commission shall prescribe the form of application and such reasonable requirements and information as may in its judgment be necessary.

(c) Upon the filing of an application for license the Commission may fix a time and place for the hearing of the application and require such notices, publications, or other service as it may prescribe by the general rule or regulation.

(d) A license shall be issued to any qualified applicant therefor authorizing the whole or any part of the operations covered by the application if it is found that the applicant is fit, willing and able properly to perform the service proposed and to conform to the provisions of this Article and the requirements, rules and regulations of the Commission thereunder, and that the proposed service, to the extent to be authorized by the license, is or will be consistent with the public interest and policy declared herein.

(e) The Commission shall have the same authority over persons operating under and holding a brokerage license as it has over motor carriers under this Article, and shall require a broker to furnish bond or other security approved by the Commission and sufficient for the protection of travelers by motor vehicle. (1949, c. 1132, s. 13; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-264: Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 523, s. 19.

§ 62-265. Emergency operating authority.

To meet unforeseen emergencies, the Commission may, upon its own initiative, or upon written request by any person, department or agency of the State, or of any county, city or town, with or without a hearing, grant appropriate authority to any owner of a duly licensed vehicle or vehicles, whether such owner holds a certificate or not, to transport passengers or household goods between such points, or within such area during the period of the emergency and to the extent necessary to relieve the same, as the Commission may fix in its order granting such authority; provided, that unless the emergency is declared by the General Assembly or under its authority, the Commission shall find from such request, or from its own knowledge or conditions, that a real emergency exists and that relief to the extent authorized in its order is immediate, pressing and necessary in the

public interest, and that the carrier so authorized has the necessary equipment and is willing to perform the emergency service as prescribed by the order. In all cases, under this section, the Commission shall first afford the holders of certificates operating in the territory affected an opportunity to render the emergency service. Upon the termination of the emergency, the operating privileges so granted shall automatically expire and the Commission shall forthwith withdraw all operating privileges granted to any person under this section. (1947, c. 1008, s. 17; 1949, c. 1132, s. 17; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1995, c. 523, s. 20.)

§ 62-266. Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 454, s. 13, effective June 24, 1985.

§ 62-267. Deviation from regular route operations.

(a) A common carrier of passengers by motor vehicle operating under a certificate issued by the Commission may occasionally deviate from the routes over which it is authorized to operate under the certificate, under such general or special rules and regulations as the Commission may prescribe.

(b) Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 523, s. 21.

(c) In no event shall the operation of empty equipment by any carrier over any route or highway be construed as a violation of the rights of any carrier. (1947, c. 1008, s. 18; 1949, c. 1132, s. 18; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1995, c. 523, s. 21.)

§ 62-268. Security for protection of public; liability insurance.

No certificate or broker's license shall be issued or remain in force until the applicant shall have procured and filed with the Division of Motor Vehicles such security bond, insurance or self-insurance for the protection of the public as the Commission shall by regulation require. The Commission shall require that every motor carrier for which a certificate or license is required by the provisions of this Chapter, shall maintain liability insurance or satisfactory surety of at least fifty thousand dollars ($50,000) because of bodily injury to or death of one person in any one accident and, subject to said limit for one person, one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000) because of bodily injury to or death of two or more persons in any one accident, and fifty thousand dollars ($50,000) because of injury to or destruction of property of others in any one accident; and the Commission may require any greater amount of insurance as may be necessary for the protection of the public. Notwithstanding any rule or regulation to the contrary, the Commission shall not require that any insurance procured and filed be provided in any single policy of insurance or through a single insurer, if the insurers involved are otherwise qualified. A motor carrier may satisfy the requirements of the Commission by procuring insurance with coverage and limits of liability required by the Commission in one or more policies of insurance issued by one or more insurers.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section or Chapter, bus companies shall file with the Commission proof of financial responsibility in the form of bonds, policies of insurance, or shall qualify as a self insurer, with minimum levels of financial responsibility as prescribed for motor carriers of passengers pursuant to the provisions of 49 U.S.C. § 31138. Provided, further, that no bus company operating solely within the State of North Carolina and which is exempt from regulation under the provisions of G.S. 62-260(a)(7) shall be required to file with the Commission proof of the financial responsibility in excess of one million five hundred thousand dollars ($1,500,000). (1947, c. 1008, s. 19; 1949, c. 1132, s. 19; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1973, c. 1206; 1977, c. 920; 1985, c. 454, s. 14; c. 676, s. 22; 1987, c. 374; 1995, c. 523, s. 22; 1998-217, s. 8.)

§ 62-269. Accounts, records and reports.

The Commission may prescribe the forms of any and all accounts, records and memoranda to be kept by motor carriers, brokers, and lessors, including the accounts, records, and memoranda of the movement of traffic, as well as of the receipts and expenditures of moneys; and it shall be unlawful for such carriers, brokers, and lessors, to keep any accounts, records, and memoranda contrary to any rules, regulations, or orders of the Commission with respect thereto. The Commission may issue orders specifying such operating, accounting, or financial papers, records, books, blanks, stubs, correspondence, or documents of motor carriers, brokers, or lessors, as may after a reasonable time be destroyed, and prescribing the length of time they shall be preserved. The Commission or its duly authorized special agents, accountants, or examiners shall at all times have access to and authority, under its order, to inspect and examine any and all lands, buildings, or equipment of motor carriers, brokers, and lessors; and shall have authority to inspect and copy any and all accounts, books, records, memoranda, correspondence, and other documents of such carriers, brokers, and lessors, and such accounts, books, records, memoranda, correspondence, and other documents of any person controlling, controlled by, or under common control with any such carrier, as the Commission deems relevant to such person's relation to or transactions with such carrier. Motor carriers, brokers, lessors, and persons shall submit their accounts, books, records, memoranda, correspondence, and other documents for the inspection and copying authorized by this section, and motor carriers, brokers, and lessors, shall submit their lands, buildings, and equipment for examination and inspection, to any duly authorized special agent, accountant, auditor, inspector, or examiner of the Commission upon demand and the display of proper credentials. (1947, c. 1008, s. 28; 1949, c. 1132, s. 25; 1959, c. 639, ss. 5, 6, 9, 10; 1961, c. 472, s. 10; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-270. Orders, notices, and service of process.

It shall be the duty of every motor carrier operating under a certificate issued under the provisions of this Article to file with the Division of Motor Vehicles a designation in writing of the name and post-office address of a person upon whom service of notices or orders may be made under this Article. Such designation may from time to time be changed by like writing similarly filed. Service of notice or orders in proceedings under this Article may be made upon a motor carrier by personal service upon it or upon the person so designated by it, or by registered mail, return receipt requested, or by certified mail with return receipt requested, addressed to it or to such person at the address filed. In proceedings before the Commission involving the lawfulness of rates, charges, classifications, or practices, service of notice upon the person or agent who has filed a tariff or schedule in behalf of such carrier shall be deemed to be due and sufficient service upon the carrier. (1947, c. 1008, s. 29; 1949, c. 1132, s. 26; 1957, c. 1152, ss. 6, 11; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1985, c. 454, s. 15; 1995, c. 523, s. 23.)

§ 62-271. Collection of rates and charges of motor carriers of household goods.

No common carriers of household goods by motor vehicle shall deliver or relinquish possession at destination of any freight transported by it in intrastate commerce until all tariff rates and charges thereon have been paid, except under such rules and regulations as the Commission may from time to time prescribe to govern the settlement of all such rates and charges, including rules and regulations for weekly or monthly settlement, and to prevent unjust discrimination or undue preference or prejudice; provided, that the provisions of this section shall not be construed to

prohibit any such carrier from extending credit in connection with rates and charges on freight transported for the United States, for any department, bureau, or agency thereof, or for the State, or political subdivision thereof. Where any common carrier by motor vehicle is instructed by a shipper or consignor to deliver household goods transported by such carrier to a consignee other than the shipper or consignor, such consignee shall not be legally liable for transportation charges in respect of the transportation of such household goods (beyond those billed against him at the time of delivery for which he is otherwise liable) which may be found to be due after the household goods have been delivered to him, if the consignee (i) is an agent only and had no beneficial title in the household goods, and (ii) prior to delivery of the household goods has notified the delivering carrier in writing of the fact of such agency and absence of beneficial title, and, in the case of shipment reconsigned or diverted to a point other than that specified in the original bill of lading, has also notified the delivering carrier in writing of the name and address of the beneficial owner of the household goods. In such cases the shipper and consignor, or, in the case of a shipment so reconsigned or diverted, the beneficial owner shall be liable for such additional charges, irrespective of any provisions to the contrary in the bill of lading or in the contract under which the shipment was made. If the consignee has given to the carrier erroneous information as to who is the beneficial owner, such consignee shall himself be liable for such additional charges, notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section. On shipments reconsigned or diverted by an agent who has furnished the carrier with a notice of agency and the proper name and address of the beneficial owner, and where such shipments are refused or abandoned at ultimate destination, the said beneficial owner shall be liable for all legally applicable charges in connection therewith. (1947, c. 1008, s. 31; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1995, c. 523, s. 24.)

§ 62-272. Allowance to shippers for transportation services.

If the owner of household goods transported under the provisions of this Article directly or indirectly renders any service connected with such transportation, or furnishes any instrumentality used therein, the charge and allowance therefor shall be published in the tariffs or schedules filed in the manner provided in this Article and shall be no more than is just and reasonable; and the Commission may, after hearing on a complaint or on its own initiative, determine what is a reasonable charge as the maximum to be paid by the carrier or carriers for the services so rendered or for the use of the instrumentality so furnished, and fix the same by appropriate order. (1947, c. 1008, s. 32; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1995, c. 523, s. 25.)

§ 62-273. Embezzlement of C.O.D. shipments.

Household goods received by any motor carrier to be transported in intrastate commerce and delivered upon collection on such delivery and remittance to the shipper of the sum of money stated in the shipping instructions to be collected and remitted to the shipper, and the money collected upon delivery of such party, are hereby declared to be held in trust by any carrier having possession thereof or the carrier making the delivery or collection, and upon failure of any such carrier to account for the household goods so received, either to the shipper to whom the collection is payable or the carrier making delivery to any carrier handling the household goods or making the collection, within 15 days after demand in writing by the shipper, or carrier, or upon failure of the delivering carrier to remit the sum so directed to be collected and remitted to the shipper, within 15 days after collection is made, shall be prima facie evidence that the household goods so received, or the funds so received, have been wilfully converted by such carrier to its own use, and the carrier so offending shall be guilty of a Class H felony and such carrier may be indicted, tried, and punished

in the county in which such shipment was delivered to the carrier or in any other county into or through which such shipment was transported by such carrier. (1947, c. 1008, s. 33; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 1277; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1995, c. 523, s. 26.)

§ 62-273.1. Criminal history record checks of applicants for and current holders of certificate to transport household goods.

(a) The following definitions apply in this section:

(1) Applicant. – An individual, partnership, limited liability corporation, or corporation who applies for certification as a common carrier of household goods in the State of North Carolina.

(2) Certificate. – A certificate of exemption or a certificate of public convenience and necessity issued by the Utilities Commission to authorize the holder to engage in the intrastate transportation of household goods for compensation in the State of North Carolina.

(3) Criminal history. – A State or federal history of conviction of a crime, whether a misdemeanor or felony, that bears upon an applicant's or current holder's fitness to possess a certificate.

(4) Current holder. – An individual, partnership, limited liability corporation, or corporation who has been certified as a common carrier of household goods in the State of North Carolina.

(b) The Commission shall conduct a criminal history record check of applicants and current holders of a certificate to transport household goods. An applicant for or current holder of a certificate to transport household goods must furnish the Commission with a complete set of the applicant's fingerprints in a manner prescribed by the Commission. In those instances where the quality characteristic of an applicant's or current holder's fingerprints is determined to be too low or otherwise inadequate for processing by the FBI, the applicant or current holder shall comply with the Commission's criminal history record check requirement pursuant to the Commission's alternate name-based records check procedure.

(c) If the applicant's or current holder's verified criminal history record check reveals one or more convictions, the convictions shall not automatically constitute cause for denying an application or revoking a certificate. However, all of the following factors shall be considered by the Commission in determining whether the application should be denied or the certificate revoked:

(1) The level and seriousness of the crime.

(2) The date of the crime.

(3) The age of the person at the time of the conviction.

(4) The nature of the crime as it relates to the duties and responsibilities of a common carrier of household goods.

(5) The employment history of the person after the date the crime was committed.

(6) Any evidence of rehabilitation of the person after the date the crime was committed.

(d) The Commission may deny an application or revoke a certificate if the applicant or current holder refuses to consent to a criminal history record check or use of fingerprints or other identifying information required by the State or National Repositories of Criminal Histories. (2012-9, s. 1.)

§ 62-274. Evidence; joinder of surety.

No report by any carrier of any accident arising in the course of the operations of such carrier, made pursuant to any requirement of the Commission, and no report by the Commission of any investigation of any such accident, shall be admitted as evidence, or used for any other purpose in any suit or action for damages growing out of any matter mentioned in such report or investigation; nor shall the discharge by any carrier of any truck driver or other employee after any such accident be offered or admitted in evidence for any purpose, in any suit or action against such carrier for damages arising out of any such accident; nor shall any insurance company or surety executing any insurance policy, bond, or other security for the protection of the public, as provided in G.S. 62-268, or as provided in G.S. 62-112, be joined with the assured carrier in any action or suit for damages, debt, or claim thereby secured; nor shall evidence of any such policy, bond, or other security be offered or received in any such action or suit against the carrier, but the surety or insurer shall be obligated within the amount of such policy, bond or other security to pay any final judgment against the carrier. (1947, c. 1008, s. 34; 1949, c. 1132, s. 31; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-275. Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 676, s. 23, effective July 10, 1985.

§ 62-276. Construction of Article.

Nothing herein contained shall be construed to relieve any motor carrier from any regulation otherwise imposed by law or lawful authority, and this Article shall not be construed to relieve any such motor carrier from any obligation or duty imposed by Chapter 20 of the General Statutes of North Carolina. (1949, c. 1132, s. 35; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-277. Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 454, s. 16, effective June 24, 1985.

§ 62-278. Revocation of license plates by Utilities Commission.

(a) The license plates of any carrier of persons or household goods by motor vehicle for compensation may be revoked and removed from the vehicles of any such carrier for wilful violation of any provision of this Chapter, or for the wilful violation of any lawful rule or regulation made and promulgated by the Utilities Commission. To that end the Commission shall have power upon complaint or upon its own motion, after notice and hearing, to order the license plates of any such offending carrier revoked and removed from the vehicles of such carrier for a period not exceeding 30 days, and it shall be the duty of the Department of Motor Vehicles to execute such orders made by the Utilities Commission upon receipt of a certified copy of the same.

(b) This section shall be in addition to and independent of other provisions of law for the enforcement of the motor carrier laws of this State. (1951, c. 1120; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1995, c. 523, s. 27.)

§ 62-279. Injunction for unlawful operations.

If any motor carrier, or any other person or corporation, shall operate a motor vehicle in violation of any provision of this Chapter applicable to motor carriers or motor vehicles generally, except as to the reasonableness of rates or charges and the discriminatory character thereof, or shall operate in violation of any rule, regulation, requirement or order of the Commission, or of any term or condition of any certificate, the Commission or any holder of a certificate duly issued by the Commission may apply to a superior court judge who has jurisdiction pursuant to G.S. 7A-47.1 or 7A-48 in the district or set of districts as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1 in which the motor carrier or other

person or corporation so operates, for the enforcement of any provisions of this Article, or of any rule, regulation, requirement, order, term or condition of the Commission. Such court shall have jurisdiction to enforce obedience to this Article or to any rule, order, or decision of the Commission by a writ of injunction or other process, mandatory or otherwise, restraining such carrier, person or corporation, or its officers, agents, employees and representatives from further violation of this Article or of any rule, order, regulation, or decision of the Commission. (1947, c. 1008, s. 30; 1949, c. 1132, s. 30; 1953, c. 1140, s. 4; 1957, c. 1152, s. 16; 1961, c. 472, ss. 8, 11; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 95; 1995, c. 523, s. 28.)

§ 62-280. Household goods carrier; marking or identification of vehicles.

(a) No carrier of household goods shall operate any motor vehicle upon a highway, public street, or public vehicular area within the State in the transportation of household goods for compensation in violation of the provisions of G.S. 20-398.

(b) The Utilities Commission may assess a civil penalty not in excess of five thousand dollars ($5,000) for the violation of subsection (a) of this section. The clear proceeds of any civil penalties collected pursuant to this subsection shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2. (2011-244, s. 2.)

§ 62-280.1. False representation of household goods carrier certificate unlawful.

(a) It is unlawful for a person not issued a certificate to operate as a carrier of household goods under the provisions of this Chapter to do any of the following:

(1) Orally, in writing, in print, or by sign, including the use of a vehicle placard, phone book, internet, magazine, newspaper, billboard, or business card, or in any other manner, directly or by implication, represent that the person holds a certificate or is otherwise authorized to operate as a carrier of household goods in this State.

(2) Use in connection with the person's name or place of business any words, letters, abbreviations, or insignia indicating or implying that the person holds a certificate or is otherwise authorized to operate as a carrier of household goods in this State.

(b) Any person who violates subsection (a) of this section or who knowingly aids and abets another person in violating subsection (a) of this section shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor and punished only by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars ($500.00) for the first offense and not more than two thousand dollars ($2,000) for any subsequent offense.

(c) The Utilities Commission may assess a civil penalty not in excess of five thousand dollars ($5,000) for the violation of subsection (a) of this section. The clear proceeds of any civil penalties collected pursuant to this subsection shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 20-383 to the contrary, any law enforcement officer with territorial jurisdiction is authorized to enforce the provisions of this section. (2011-244, s. 2; 2021-23, s. 19; 2025-25, s. 29(3).)

§ 62-281. Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 454, s. 17, effective June 24, 1985.

§§ 62-282 through 62-289. Reserved for future codification purposes.

Article 12A.

Human Service Transportation.

§ 62-289.1. Short title.

This Article shall be known and may be cited as the "North Carolina Act to Remove Barriers to Coordinating Human Service and Volunteer Transportation". (1981, c. 792, s. 1.)

§ 62-289.2. Purpose.

In order to promote improved transportation for the elderly, handicapped and residents of rural areas and small towns through an expanded and coordinated transportation network, it is the intent of the General Assembly to recognize human service transportation and volunteer transportation as separate but contributing components of the North Carolina transportation system. Further, it is the intent of the General Assembly to remove barriers to low cost human service transportation. (1981, c. 792, s. 1.)

§ 62-289.3. Definitions.

The following definitions apply in this Article:

(1) Human service agency. – Any charitable or governmental agency including, but not limited to: county departments of social services, area mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse authorities, local health departments, councils on aging, community action agencies, sheltered workshops, group homes, and State residential institutions.

(2) Human service transportation. – Motor vehicle transportation provided on a nonprofit basis by a human service agency for the purpose of transporting clients or recipients in connection with programs sponsored by the agency. "Human service transportation" also means motor vehicle transportation provided by for-profit persons under exclusive contract with a human service agency for the transportation of clients or recipients, and such provider shall also qualify as a human service agency for the purpose of motor vehicle registration during the term of the contract. The motor vehicle may be owned, leased, borrowed, or contracted for use by or from the human service agency.

(3) Nonprofit. – As applied to human service transportation, means motor vehicle transportation provided at cost.

(4) Person. – An individual, corporation, company, association, partnership, or other legal entity.

(5) Volunteer transportation. – Motor vehicle transportation provided by any person under the direction, sponsorship, or supervision of a human service agency. The person may receive an allowance to defray the actual cost of operating the vehicle but shall not receive any other compensation. (1981, c. 792, s. 1; 1987, c. 407; 2018-47, s. 6(b).)

§ 62-289.4. Classification of transportation.

The forms of transportation defined in G.S. 62-289.3(2) and (5) shall be classified as "human service transportation" and "volunteer transportation" for purposes of regulation, insurance, and general administration. (1981, c. 792, s. 1.)

§ 62-289.5. Inapplicable laws and regulations.

Human services transportation and volunteer transportation shall not be considered as for-hire transportation, commercial transportation or motor carriers, as defined by G.S. 62-3(17). Such transportation shall not be subject to regulation as motor carriers under G.S. 62-261. (1981, c. 792, s. 1.)

§ 62-289.6. Insurance for volunteers.

Human service agencies are authorized to purchase insurance to cover persons who provide volunteer transportation. (1981, c. 792, s. 1.)

§ 62-289.7. Municipal licenses and taxes.

No county, city, town, municipal corporation or other unit of local government may impose a special tax on or require a special license for human service transportation or volunteer transportation other than that customarily used or imposed on private passenger automobiles unless the tax or license is provided for by a statute, ordinance, or regulation specifically addressing human service transportation or volunteer transportation. (1981, c. 792, s. 1.)

Article 13.

Reorganization of Public Utilities.

§ 62-290. Corporations whose property and franchises sold under order of court or execution.

When the property and franchises of a public utility corporation are sold under a judgment or decree of a court of this State, or of the district court of the United States, or under execution, to satisfy a mortgage debt or other encumbrance thereon, such sale vests in the purchaser all the right, title, interest and property of the parties to the action in which such judgment or decree was made, to said property and franchises, subject to all the conditions, limitations and restrictions of the corporation; and the purchaser and his associates thereupon become a new corporation, by such name as they select, and they are the stockholders in the ratio of the purchase money by them contributed; and are entitled to all the rights and franchises and subject to all the conditions, limitations and penalties of the corporation whose property and franchises have been so sold. In the event of the sale of a railroad in foreclosure of a mortgage or deed of trust, whether under a decree of court or otherwise, the corporation created by or in consequence of the sale succeeds to all the franchises, rights and privileges of the original corporation only when the sale is of all the railroad owned by the company and described in the mortgage or deed of trust, and when the railroad is sold as an entirety. If a purchaser at any such sale is a corporation, such purchasing corporation shall succeed to all the properties, franchises, powers, rights, and privileges of the original corporation: Provided, that this shall not affect vested rights and shall not be construed to alter in any manner the public policy of the State now or hereafter established with reference to trusts and contracts in restraint of trade. (Code, ss. 697, 698; 1897, c. 305; 1901, c. 2, s. 99; Rev., s. 1238; 1913, c. 25, s. 1; 1919, c. 75; C.S., s. 1221; 1955, c. 1371, s. 2; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-291. New owners to meet and organize; special rule for railroads.

(a) The persons for whom the property and franchises have been purchased pursuant to G.S. 62-290 shall meet within 30 days after the delivery of the conveyance made by virtue of said judgment or decree, and organize the new corporation, 10 days' written notice of the time and place of the meeting having been given to each of said persons. At this meeting they shall adopt a corporate name and seal, determine the amount of the capital stock of the corporation, and shall

have power and authority to make and issue certificates of stock in shares of such amounts as they see fit. The corporation may then, or at any time thereafter, create and issue preferred stock to such an amount, and at such time, as they may deem necessary.

(b) Whenever the purchaser of the real estate, track and fixtures of any railroad corporation which has heretofore been sold, or may hereafter be sold, by virtue of any mortgage executed by such corporation or execution issued upon any judgment or decree of any court, shall acquire title to the same in the manner prescribed by law, such purchaser may associate with him any number of persons, and make and acknowledge and file articles of association as prescribed by this Chapter. Such purchaser and his associates shall thereupon be a new corporation, with all the powers, privileges and franchises and subject to all of the provisions of this Chapter.

(c) When any railroad corporation shall be dissolved, or its property sold and conveyed under any execution, deed of trust, mortgage or other conveyance, the owner or purchaser shall constitute a new corporation upon compliance with law. (1871-2, c. 138, s. 5; Code, ss. 1936, 2005; 1901, c. 2, ss. 100, 101, 102; Rev., ss. 1239, 1240, 2552, 2565; C.S., ss. 1222, 3462, 3463; 1955, c. 1371, s. 2; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-292. Certificate to be filed with Secretary of State.

It is the duty of the new corporation provided for by this Article, within one month after its organization, to make certificate thereof, under its common seal, attested by the signature of its president, specifying the date of the organization, the name adopted, the amount of capital stock, and the names of its president and directors, and transmit the certificate to the Secretary of State, to be filed and recorded in his office. A certified copy of this certificate so filed shall be recorded in the office of the clerk of the superior court of the county in which is located the principal office of the corporation, and is the charter and evidence of the corporate existence of the new corporation. (1901, c. 2, s. 103; Rev., s. 1241; C.S., s. 1223; 1955, c. 1371, s. 2; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-293. Effect on liens and other rights.

Nothing contained in this Article in any manner impairs the lien of a prior mortgage, or other encumbrance, upon the property or franchises conveyed under a sale pursuant to this Article when by the terms of the judgment or decree under which the sale was made, or by operation of law, the sale was made subject to the lien of any such prior mortgage or other encumbrance. No such sale and conveyance or organization of such new corporation in any way affects the rights of any person or body politic not a party to the action in which the judgment or decree was made, nor of any party except as determined by the judgment or decree. When a trustee has been made a party to such action and his cestui que trust, for reason satisfactory to the court, has not been made a party thereto, the rights and interest of the cestui que trust are concluded by the decree. (1901, c. 2, s. 103; Rev., s. 1241; C.S., s. 1224; 1955, c. 1371, s. 2; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§§ 62-294 through 62-299. Reserved for future codification purposes.

Article 14.

Fees and Charges.

§ 62-300. Particular fees and charges fixed; payment.

(a) The Commission shall receive and collect the following fees and charges in accordance with the classification of utilities as provided in rules and regulations of the Commission, and no others:

(1) Twenty-five dollars ($25.00) with each notice of appeal to the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court, and with each notice of application for a writ of certiorari.

(2) With each application for a new certificate for motor carrier rights, the fee shall be two hundred fifty dollars ($250.00) when filed by Class 1 motor carriers, one hundred dollars ($100.00) when filed by Class 2 motor carriers, and twenty-five dollars ($25.00) when filed by Class 3 motor carriers, and twenty-five dollars ($25.00) as filing fee for any amendment thereto so as to extend or enlarge the scope of operations thereunder, and twenty-five dollars ($25.00) for each broker who applies for a brokerage license under the provisions of this Chapter.

(3) With each application for a general increase in rates, fares and charges and for each filing of a tariff which seeks general increases in rates, fares and charges, the fee will be five hundred dollars ($500.00) for Class A utilities and Class 1 motor carriers, two hundred fifty dollars ($250.00) for Class B utilities and Class 2 motor carriers, one hundred dollars ($100.00) for Class C utilities and twenty-five dollars ($25.00) for Class D utilities and Class 3 motor carriers; provided that in the case of an application or tariff for a general increase in rates filed by a tariff agent for more than one carrier, the applicable fee shall be the highest fee prescribed for any motor carrier included in the application or tariff. This fee shall not apply to applications for adjustments in particular rates, fares, or charges for the purpose of eliminating inequities, preferences or discriminations or to applications to adjust rates and charges based solely on the increased cost of fuel used in the generation or production of electric power.

(4) One hundred dollars ($100.00) with each application by motor carrier of passengers for the abandonment or permanent or temporary discontinuance of transportation service previously authorized in a certificate.

(4a) Repealed by Session Laws 1998-128, s. 10.

(5) With each application for a certificate of public convenience and necessity or for any amendment thereto so as to extend or enlarge the scope of operations thereunder, the fee shall be two hundred fifty dollars ($250.00) for Class A utilities, one hundred dollars ($100.00) for Class B utilities, and twenty-five dollars ($25.00) for Class C and D utilities and two hundred fifty dollars ($250.00) for any other person seeking a certificate of public convenience and necessity.

(5a) With each application by a bus company for an original certificate of authority or for any amendment thereto or to an existing certificate of public convenience and necessity so as to extend or enlarge the scope of operations thereunder the fee shall be two hundred fifty dollars ($250.00).

(6) With each application for approval of the issuance of securities or for the approval of any sale, lease, hypothecation, lien, or other transfer of any household goods or operating rights of any carrier or public utility over which the Commission has jurisdiction, the fee shall be two hundred fifty dollars ($250.00) for Class A utilities and Class 1 motor carriers, one hundred dollars ($100.00) for Class B utilities and Class 2 motor carriers, and twenty-five dollars ($25.00) for Class C and D utilities and Class 3 motor carriers; provided, that in the case of sales, leases and transfers between two or more carriers or

utilities, the applicable fee shall be the highest fee prescribed for any party to the transaction.

(7) Ten dollars ($10.00) with each application, petition, or complaint not embraced in (2) through (6) of this section, wherein such application, petition, or complaint seeks affirmative relief against a carrier or public utility over which the Commission has jurisdiction. This fee shall not apply to applications for adjustments in particular rates, fares or charges for the purpose of eliminating inequities, preferences or discriminations; nor shall this fee apply to applications, petitions, or complaints made by any county, city or town; nor shall this fee apply to applications or petitions made by individuals seeking service or relief from a public utility.

(8) Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 454, s. 18.

(9) One dollar ($1.00) for each page (8 1/2 x 11 inches) of transcript of testimony, but not less than five dollars ($5.00) for any such transcript.

(10) Twenty cents (20¢) for each page of copies of papers, orders, certificates or other records, but not less than one dollar ($1.00) for any such order or record, plus five dollars ($5.00) for formal certification of any such paper, order or record.

(11), (12) Repealed by Session Laws 1985, c. 454, s. 18.

(13) Two hundred fifty dollars ($250.00) with each application for a certificate of public convenience and necessity to construct a transmission line.

(14) Twenty-five dollars ($25.00) with each filing by a person otherwise exempt from Commission regulation under Public Law 103-305 to participate in standard transportation practices as set out by the Commission.

(15) One hundred dollars ($100.00) for each application for exemption filed by nonprofit and consumer-owned water or sewer utilities pursuant to G.S. 62-110.5.

(16) Two hundred fifty dollars ($250.00) with each application for a certificate of authority to engage in business as an electric generator lessor filed pursuant to G.S. 62-126.7 or each registration statement for a clean energy facility or new clean energy facility filed pursuant to G.S. 62-133.8(*l*).

(17) Fifty dollars ($50.00) for each report of proposed construction filed by the owner of an electric generating facility that is exempt from the certification requirements of G.S. 62-110.1(a).

(b) All witness fees, officers' fees serving papers, and cost of serving notice by publication shall be paid by the party at whose instance or for whose benefit such fees and costs are incurred.

(c) No application, petition, complaint, notice of appeal, notice of application for writ of certiorari, or other document or paper, the filing of which requires the payment of a fee under this Article, shall be deemed filed until the fees herein required shall have been paid to the Commission.

(d) The fees and charges as set forth in subdivisions (1), (7), (9) and (10) of subsection (a) of this section shall not apply to the State of North Carolina or to any board, department, commission, institution or other agency of the State; and all applications, petitions or complaints submitted by the State of North Carolina or any board, department, commission, institution or other agency of the State shall be filed without the payment of the fees required by this section.

(e) The provisions of this section shall apply with respect to the regulation of electric membership corporations as provided in G.S. 117-18.1. (1953, c. 825, s. 1; 1955, c. 64; 1957, c. 1152, s. 15; 1961, c. 472, ss. 2-4; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1967, c. 1039; c. 1190, s. 7; 1969, c. 721, s. 2; 1971, c. 736, s. 2; 1975, c. 447, s. 1; 1977, c. 1003; 1977, 2nd Sess., c. 129, s. 32; 1979, c. 792; 1985, c. 311, ss. 1-4; c. 454, ss. 18, 19; c. 676, s. 24; 1991, c. 189, s. 2; 1995, c. 523, ss. 29, 32; 1997-437, s. 3; 1998-128, s. 10; 1999-180, s. 6; 2017-192, s. 10(b); 2021-23, s. 26(a); 2023-138, s. 1(d); 2024-57, s. 3D.1(g).)

§ 62-301: Repealed by Session Laws 1989, c. 787, s. 2.

§ 62-302. Regulatory fee.

(a) Fee Imposed. – It is the policy of the State of North Carolina to provide fair regulation of public utilities in the interest of the public, as provided in G.S. 62-2. The cost of regulating public utilities is a burden incident to the privilege of operating as a public utility. Therefore, for the purpose of defraying the cost of regulating public utilities, every public utility subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission shall pay a quarterly regulatory fee, in addition to all other fees and taxes, as provided in this section. The fees collected shall be used only to pay the expenses of the Commission and the Public Staff in regulating public utilities in the interest of the public and to maintain a reasonable margin for a reserve fund. The amount of the reserve may not exceed one-half of the cost of operating the Commission and the Public Staff as reflected in the certified budget for the previous fiscal year.

It is also the policy of the State to provide limited oversight of certain electric membership corporations as provided in G.S. 62-53. Therefore, for the purpose of defraying the cost of providing the oversight authorized by G.S. 62-53 and G.S. 117-18.1, each fiscal year each electric membership corporation whose principal purpose is to furnish or cause to be furnished bulk electric supplies at wholesale as provided in G.S. 117-16 shall pay an annual fee as provided in this section.

(b) Public Utility Rate. –

(1) Repealed by Session Laws 2000-140, s. 56, effective July 21, 2000.

(2) Unless adjusted under subdivision (3) of this subsection, the public utility fee is a percentage of a utility's jurisdictional revenues as follows:

Noncompetitive jurisdiction revenues	0.148%
Subsection (h) competitive jurisdictional revenues	0.04%
Subsection (m) competitive jurisdictional revenues	0.02%

(3) In the first half of each calendar year, the Commission shall review the estimated cost of operating the Commission and the Public Staff for the next fiscal year, including a reasonable margin for the reserve fund allowed under this section. In making this determination, the Commission shall consider all relevant factors that may affect the cost of operating the Commission or the Public Staff or a possible unanticipated change in competitive and noncompetitive jurisdictional revenues. If the estimated receipts provided for under this section are less than the estimated cost of operating the Commission and the Public Staff for the next fiscal year, including the reasonable margin for the reserve fund, then the Commission may increase the public utility regulatory fee on noncompetitive jurisdictional revenues effective for the next fiscal year. In no event may the percentage rate of the public utility regulatory

fee on noncompetitive jurisdiction revenues exceed seventeen and one-half hundredths of one percent (0.175%). If the estimated receipts provided for under this section are more than the estimated cost of operating the Commission and the Public Staff for the next fiscal year, including the reasonable margin for the reserve fund, then the Commission shall decrease the public utility regulatory fee on noncompetitive jurisdictional revenues effective for the next fiscal year.

(4) As used in this section:

a. "Noncompetitive jurisdictional revenues" means all revenues derived or realized from intrastate tariffs, rates, and charges approved or allowed by the Commission or collected pursuant to Commission order or rule, but not including tap-on fees or any other form of contributions in aid of construction.

b. "Subsection (h) competitive jurisdictional revenues" means all revenues derived from retail services provided by local exchange companies and competing local providers that have elected to operate under G.S. 62-133.5(h).

c. "Subsection (m) competitive jurisdictional revenues" means all revenues derived from retail services provided by local exchange companies and competing local providers that have elected to operate under G.S. 62-133.5(m).

(b1) Electric Membership Corporation Rate. – The electric membership corporation regulatory fee for each fiscal year is two hundred thousand dollars ($200,000).

(c) When Due. – The electric membership corporation regulatory fee imposed under this section shall be paid in quarterly installments. The fee is due and payable to the Commission on or before the 15th day of the second month following the end of each quarter.

The public utility regulatory fee imposed under this section is due and payable to the Commission on or before the 15th day of the second month following the end of each quarter. Every public utility subject to the public utility regulatory fee shall, on or before the date the fee is due for each quarter, prepare and render a report on a form prescribed by the Commission. The report shall state the public utility's total North Carolina jurisdictional revenues for the preceding quarter and shall be accompanied by any supporting documentation that the Commission may by rule require. Receipts shall be reported on an accrual basis.

If a public utility's report for the first quarter of any fiscal year shows that application of the percentage rate would yield a quarterly fee of twenty-five dollars ($25.00) or less, the public utility shall pay an estimated fee for the entire fiscal year in the amount of twenty-five dollars ($25.00). If, after payment of the estimated fee, the public utility's subsequent returns show that application of the percentage rate would yield quarterly fees that total more than twenty-five dollars ($25.00) for the entire fiscal year, the public utility shall pay the cumulative amount of the fee resulting from application of the percentage rate, to the extent it exceeds the amount of fees, other than any surcharge, previously paid.

(d) Use of Proceeds. – A special fund in the office of State Treasurer, the Utilities Commission and Public Staff Fund, is created. The fees collected pursuant to this section and all other funds received by the Commission or the Public Staff, except for the clear proceeds of civil penalties collected pursuant to G.S. 62-50(d) and the clear proceeds of funds forfeited pursuant to G.S. 62-310(a), shall be deposited in the Utilities Commission and Public Staff Fund. The Fund

shall be placed in an interest bearing account and any interest or other income derived from the Fund shall be credited to the Fund. Moneys in the Fund shall only be spent pursuant to appropriation by the General Assembly.

The Utilities Commission and Public Staff Fund shall be subject to the provisions of the State Budget Act except that no unexpended surplus of the Fund shall revert to the General Fund. All funds credited to the Utilities Commission and Public Staff Fund shall be used only to pay the expenses of the Commission and the Public Staff in regulating public utilities in the interest of the public as provided by this Chapter and in regulating electric membership corporations as provided in G.S. 117-18.1.

The clear proceeds of civil penalties collected pursuant to G.S. 62-50(d) and the clear proceeds of funds forfeited pursuant to G.S. 62-310(a) shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.

(e) Fee changes. – If a utility's regulatory fee obligation is changed, the Commission shall either adjust the utility's rates to reflect the change or approve the utility's request for an accounting order allowing deferral of the change in the fee obligation. (1989, c. 787, s. 1; 1998-215, s. 126; 1999-180, s. 5; 2000-140, s. 56; 2006-203, s. 18; 2009-238, s. 6; 2011-52, s. 2; 2014-59, s. 1; 2015-134, ss. 1(a), 2, 3.)

§ 62-302.1. Regulatory fee for combustion residuals surface impoundments.

(a) **(Expires April 1, 2030 – see note)** Fee Imposed. – Each public utility with a coal combustion residuals surface impoundment shall pay a regulatory fee for the purpose of defraying the costs of oversight of coal combustion residuals. The fee is in addition to the fee imposed under G.S. 62-302. The fees collected under this section shall only be used to pay the expenses of the Department of Environmental Quality in providing oversight of coal combustion residuals.

(b) Rate. – The combustion residuals surface impoundment fee shall be three-hundredths of one percent (0.03%) of the North Carolina jurisdictional revenues of each public utility with a coal combustion residuals surface impoundment. For the purposes of this section, the term "North Carolina jurisdictional revenues" has the same meaning as in G.S. 62-302.

(c) When Due. – The fee shall be paid in quarterly installments. The fee is payable to the Department of Environmental Quality on or before the 15th of the second month following the end of each quarter. Each public utility subject to this fee shall, on or before the date the fee is due for each quarter, prepare and render a report on a form prescribed by the Department of Environmental Quality. The report shall state the public utility's total North Carolina jurisdictional revenues for the preceding quarter and shall be accompanied by any supporting documentation that the Department of Environmental Quality may by rule require. Receipts shall be reported on an accrual basis.

(d) Use of Proceeds. – A special fund in the Department of Environmental Quality is created. The fees collected pursuant to this section shall be deposited in the Coal Combustion Residuals Management Fund. The Fund shall be placed in an interest-bearing account, and any interest or other income derived from the Fund shall be credited to the Fund. Subject to appropriation by the General Assembly, one hundred percent (100%) shall be used by the Department of Environmental Quality. All funds credited to the Fund shall be used only to pay the expenses of the Department of Environmental Quality in providing oversight of coal combustion residuals.

(e) Recovery of Fee. – The North Carolina Utilities Commission shall not allow an electric public utility to recover this fee from the retail electric customers of the State. (2014-122, s. 15(a); 2015-1, s. 3.6; 2015-7, s. 7; 2015-241, s. 14.30(c), (u); 2016-95, s. 2; 2023-134, s. 12.14(e).)

§§ 62-303 through 62-309. Reserved for future codification purposes.

Article 15.

Penalties and Actions.

§ 62-310. Public utility violating any provision of Chapter, rules or orders; penalty; enforcement by injunction.

(a) Any public utility which violates any of the provisions of this Chapter or refuses to conform to or obey any rule, order or regulation of the Commission shall, in addition to the other penalties prescribed in this Chapter forfeit and pay a sum up to one thousand dollars ($1,000) for each offense, to be recovered in an action to be instituted in the Superior Court of Wake County, in the name of the State of North Carolina on the relation of the Utilities Commission; and each day such public utility continues to violate any provision of this Chapter or continues to refuse to obey or perform any rule, order or regulation prescribed by the Commission shall be a separate offense.

(b) If any person or corporation shall furnish water or sewer utility service in violation of any provision of this Chapter applicable to water or sewer utilities, except as to the reasonableness of rates or charges and the discriminatory character thereof, or shall provide such service in violation of any rule, regulation or order of the Commission, the Commission shall apply to a superior court judge who has jurisdiction pursuant to G.S. 7A-47.1 or 7A-48 in the district or set of districts as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1 in which the person or corporation so operates, for the enforcement of any provision of this Chapter or of any rule, regulation or order of the Commission. The court shall have jurisdiction to enforce obedience to this Chapter or to any rule, regulation or order of the Commission by appropriate writ, order or other process restraining such person, corporation, or their representatives from further violation of this Chapter or of any rule, regulation or order of the Commission. (1899, c. 164, s. 23; Rev., s. 1087; C.S., s. 1106; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; c. 307, ss. 36, 37; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1973, c. 1073; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 96.)

§ 62-311. Willful acts of employees deemed those of public utility.

The willful act of any officer, agent, or employee of a public utility, acting within the scope of his official duties of employment, shall, for the purpose of this Article, be deemed to be the willful act of the utility. (1933, c. 307, s. 29; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-312. Actions to recover penalties.

Except as otherwise provided in this Chapter, an action for the recovery of any penalty under this Chapter shall be instituted in Wake County, and shall be instituted in the name of the State of North Carolina on the relation of the Utilities Commission against the person incurring such penalty; or whenever such action is upon the complaint of any injured person, it shall be instituted in the name of the State of North Carolina on the relation of the Utilities Commission upon the complaint of such injured person against the person incurring such penalty. Such action may be instituted and prosecuted by the Attorney General, the district attorney of the Wake County Superior Court, or the injured person. The procedure in such actions, the right of appeal and the rules regulating appeals shall be the same as provided by law in other civil actions. (Code, s. 1976; 1885, c. 221; 1899, c. 164, ss. 8, 15; Rev., ss. 1092, 1113, 2647; C.S., ss. 1062, 1111, 3415; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; c. 307, s. 30; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1973, c. 47, s. 2.)

§ 62-313. Refusal to permit Commission to inspect records made misdemeanor.

Any public utility, its officers or agents in charge thereof, that fails or refuses upon the written demand of the Commission, or a majority of said Commission, and under the seal of the Commission, to permit the Commission, its authorized representatives or employees to examine and inspect its books, records, accounts and documents, or its plant, property, or facilities, as provided for by law, shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor. Each day of such failure or refusal shall constitute a separate offense and each such offense shall be punishable only by a fine of not less than five hundred dollars ($500.00) and not more than five thousand dollars ($5,000). (1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 483; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 62-314. Violating rules, with injury to others.

If any public utility doing business in this State by its agents or employees shall be guilty of the violation of the rules and regulations provided and prescribed by the Commission, and if after due notice of such violation given to the principal officer thereof, if residing in the State, or, if not, to the manager or superintendent or secretary or treasurer if residing in the State, or, if not, then to any local agent thereof, ample and full recompense for the wrong or injury done thereby to any person as may be directed by the Commission shall not be made within 30 days from the time of such notice, such public utility shall incur a penalty for each offense of five hundred dollars ($500.00). (1899, c. 164, s. 15; Rev., s. 1086; C.S., s. 1105; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-315. Failure to make report; obstructing Commission.

Every officer, agent or employee of any public utility, who shall willfully neglect or refuse to make and furnish any report required by the Commission for the purposes of this Chapter, or who shall willfully or unlawfully hinder, delay or obstruct the Commission in the discharge of the duties hereby imposed upon it, shall forfeit and pay five hundred dollars ($500.00) for each offense, to be recovered in an action in the name of the State. A delay of 10 days to make and furnish such report shall raise the presumption that the same was willful. (1899, c. 164, s. 18; Rev., s. 1089; C.S., s. 1108; 1933, c. 134, s. 8; 1941, c. 97; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-316. Disclosure of information by employee of Commission unlawful.

It shall be unlawful for any agent or employees of the Commission knowingly and willfully to divulge any fact or information which may come to his knowledge during the course of any examination or inspection made under authority of this Chapter, except as he may be directed by the Commission or by a court or judge thereof. (1947, c. 1008, s. 30; 1949, c. 1132, s. 30; 1953, c. 1140, s. 4; 1957, c. 1152, s. 16; 1961, c. 472, ss. 8, 11; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1971, c. 736, s. 1.)

§ 62-317. Remedies for injuries cumulative.

The remedies given by this Chapter to persons injured shall be regarded as cumulative to the remedies otherwise provided by law against public utilities. (1899, c. 164, s. 26; Rev., s. 1093; C.S., s. 1112; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-318. Allowing or accepting rebates a misdemeanor.

If any person shall participate in illegally pooling freights or shall directly or indirectly allow or accept rebates on freights, he shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1879, c. 237, s. 2; Code, s. 1968; Rev., s. 3762; C.S., s. 3520; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 484; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 62-319. Riding on train unlawfully; venue.

If any person, with the intention of being transported free in violation of law, rides or attempts to ride on top of any car, coach, engine or tender, on any railroad in this State, or on the drawheads between cars, or under cars, on truss rods, or trucks, or in any freight car, or on a platform of any baggage car, express car or mail car on any train, he shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor. Any person charged with a violation of this section may be tried in any county in this State through which such train may pass carrying such person, or in any county in which such violation may have occurred or may be discovered. (1899, c. 625; 1905, c. 32; Rev., s. 3748; C.S., s. 3508; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 485; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 62-320: Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 523, s. 30.

§ 62-321. Penalty for nondelivery of intrastate telegraph message.

Any telegraph company doing business in this State that shall fail to transmit and deliver any intrastate message within a reasonable time shall forfeit and pay to anyone who may sue for same a penalty of twenty-five dollars ($25.00). Such penalty shall be in addition to any right of action that any person may have for the recovery of damages. Proof of the sending of any message from one point in this State to another point in this State shall be prima facie evidence that it is an intrastate message. (1919, c. 175; C.S., s. 1704; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-322. Unauthorized manufacture or sale of switch-lock keys a misdemeanor.

It shall be unlawful for any person to make, manufacture, sell or give away to any other person any duplicate key to any lock used by any railroad company in this State on its switches or switch tracks, except upon the written order of that officer of such railroad company whose duty it is to distribute and issue switch-lock keys to the employees of such railroad company. Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1909, c. 795; C.S., s. 3477; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 487; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 62-323. Willful injury to property of public utility a felony.

(a) [Injuring a Public Utility; Punishment. –] If any person shall willfully do or cause to be done any act or acts whatever whereby any building, construction or work of any public utility, or any engine, machine or structure or any matter or thing appertaining to the same, including hardware, software, or other digital infrastructure necessary for the operations of the public utility, shall be stopped, obstructed, impaired, weakened, injured or destroyed, he shall be guilty of a Class C felony.

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

(c) Civil Remedies. – Any person whose property or person is injured by reason of a violation of subsection (a) of this section shall have a right of action on account of such injury done against the person who committed the violation 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. If damages are assessed in such case, the plaintiff shall be entitled to recover treble the amount of damages fixed by the verdict or punitive damages pursuant to Chapter 1D of the General Statutes, together with costs, including attorneys' fees. A violation of subsection (a) of this section shall constitute willful or wanton conduct within the meaning of G.S. 1D-5(7) in any civil action

filed as a result of the violation. 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.

(d) [Prohibition Regarding Treble Damages. –] The provisions of subsection (c) of this section relating to treble damages shall not be made known to the trier of fact through any means, including voir dire, the introduction into evidence, argument, or instructions to the jury.

(e) [Applicability. –] The provisions of this section shall only apply to conduct resulting in injury to a public utility, or property thereof, not otherwise covered by G.S. 14-150.2, 14-154, or 14-159.1.

(f) [Exclusions. –] Nothing in this section shall apply to work or activity that is performed at or on a public utility by the owner or operator of the utility, or an agent of the owner or operator authorized to perform such work or activity by the owner or operator. (1871-2, c. 138, s. 39; Code, s. 1974; Rev., s. 3756; C.S., s. 3478; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 488; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2024-45, s. 9(c).)

§ 62-324. Disclosure of information as to shipments unlawful.

(a) It shall be unlawful for any common carrier engaged in intrastate commerce or any officer, receiver, trustee, lessee, agent, or employee of such carrier, or for any other person authorized by such carrier, to receive information, knowingly to disclose to, or permit to be acquired by any person other than the shipper or consignee without the consent of such shipper or consignee, any information concerning the nature, kind, quantity, destination, consignee, or routing of any property tendered or delivered to such common carrier for such transportation, which information may be used to the detriment or prejudice of such shipper or consignee, or which may improperly disclose his business transactions to a competitor; and it shall also be unlawful for any person to solicit or knowingly receive any such information which may be so used.

(b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the giving of such information in response to any legal process issued under the authority of any court, or any officer or agent of the State or of the government of the United States, in the exercise of his power, or to any officer or other duly authorized person seeking such information for the prosecution of persons charged with or suspected of crimes or to another carrier, or its duly authorized agent, for the purpose of adjusting mutual traffic accounts in the ordinary course of business of such carriers. (1947, c. 1008, s. 30; 1961, c. 472, s. 8; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1.)

§ 62-325. Unlawful motor carrier operations.

(a) Any person, whether carrier, passenger, shipper, consignee, or any officer, employee, agent, or representative thereof, who shall knowingly offer, grant, or give or solicit, accept, or receive any rebate, concession, or discrimination in violation of any provision of this Chapter, or who by means of any false statement or representation, or by the use of any false or fictitious bill, bill of lading, receipt, voucher, roll, account, claim, certificate, affidavit, deposition, lease, or bill of sale, or by any other means or device, shall knowingly and willfully by any such means or otherwise fraudulently seek to evade or defeat regulations as in this Chapter provided for motor carriers, shall be deemed guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof only be fined not more than five hundred dollars ($500.00) for the first offense and not more than two thousand dollars ($2,000) for any subsequent offense.

(b) Any motor carrier, or other person, or any officer, agent, employee, or representative thereof, who shall willfully fail or refuse to make a report to the Commission as required by this Article, or other applicable law, or to make specific and full, true, and correct answer to any question within 30 days from the time it is lawfully required by the Commission so to do, or to keep accounts, records, and memoranda in the form and manner prescribed by the Commission, or shall knowingly and willfully falsify, destroy, mutilate, or alter any such report, account, record, or memorandum, or shall knowingly and willfully neglect or fail to make true and correct entries in such accounts, records, or memoranda of all facts and transactions appertaining to the business of the carrier, or person required under this Article to keep the same, or shall knowingly and willfully keep any accounts, records, or memoranda contrary to the rules, regulations, or orders of the Commission with respect thereto, shall be deemed guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof only be subject for each offense to a fine of not more than five thousand dollars ($5,000). As used in this subsection the words "kept" and "keep" shall be construed to mean made, prepared, or compiled, as well as retained. It shall be the duty of the Commission to prescribe and enforce such general rules and regulations as it may deem necessary to compel all motor carriers to keep accurate records of all revenue received by them to the end that any tax levied and assessed by the State of North Carolina upon revenues may be collected. Any agent or employee of a motor carrier who shall willfully and knowingly make a false report or record of fares, charges, or other revenue received by a carrier or collected in its behalf shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(c) Any person who, at any bus terminal, solicits or otherwise attempts to induce any person to use some form of transportation for compensation other than that lawfully using said terminal premises by contract with the terminal operator or by valid order of the Commission shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor. (1947, c. 1008, s. 30; 1949, c. 1132, s. 30; 1953, c. 1140, s. 4; 1957, c. 1152, s. 16; 1961, c. 472, ss. 8, 11; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 489; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 62-326. Furnishing false information to the Commission; withholding information from the Commission.

(a) Every person, firm or corporation operating under the jurisdiction of the Utilities Commission or who is required by law to file reports with the Commission who shall knowingly or willfully file or give false information to the Utilities Commission in any report, reply, response, or other statement or document furnished to the Commission shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(b) Every person, firm, or corporation operating under the jurisdiction of the Utilities Commission or who is required by law to file reports with the Commission who shall willfully withhold clearly specified and reasonably obtainable information from the Commission in any report, response, reply or statement filed with the Commission in the performance of the duties of the Commission or who shall fail or refuse to file any report, response, reply or statement required by the Commission in the performance of the duties of the Commission shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1969, c. 765, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 490; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 62-327. Gifts to members of Commission, Commission employees, or Public Staff.

It shall be unlawful for any officer, agent, employee, or attorney of any public utility or any public utility holding company, subsidiary, or affiliated company, to knowingly offer or make to any member of the Commission, Commission staff, or Public Staff, any gift of money, property, or anything of value. It shall be unlawful for any member of the Commission, Commission staff, or

Public Staff to knowingly accept any gift of money, property, or anything of value from any officer, agent, employee, or attorney of any public utility or any public utility holding company, subsidiary, or affiliated company; provided, however, that it shall not be unlawful for members of the Commission, Commission staff, or Public Staff to attend public breakfasts, lunches, dinners, or banquets sponsored by such entities. Any person violating this section shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor and may only be fined in the discretion of the court; provided, further, that any member of the Commission staff, or member of the Public Staff violating this section shall also be subject to dismissal for cause. (1977, c. 468, s. 16; 1993, c. 539, s. 491; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2021-23, s. 24.)

§ 62-328. Unauthorized use of Citizens Band equipment.

(a) As used in this section, "Citizens Band radio equipment" means Citizens Band radio equipment authorized by the Federal Communications Commission.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any person willfully and knowingly to use Citizens Band radio equipment not authorized by the Federal Communications Commission. Unauthorized Citizens Band radio equipment includes the use of power amplifiers or equipment prohibited under applicable federal regulations.

(c) This section does not apply to any licensee that is exempted under the provisions of 47 U.S.C. § 302a(f)(2).

(d) Any person willfully and knowingly violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor. (2004-72, s. 1.)

§ 62-329: Reserved for future codification.

§ 62-330: Reserved for future codification.

§ 62-331: Reserved for future codification.

§ 62-332: Reserved for future codification.

Article 16.

Security Provisions.

§ 62-333. Screening employment applications.

The Chief Personnel Officer, or that person's designee, of any public utility franchised to do business in North Carolina shall be permitted to obtain from the State Bureau of Investigation a confidential copy of criminal history record information for screening an applicant for employment with or an employee of a utility or utility contractor where the employment or job to be performed falls within a class or category of positions certified by the North Carolina Utilities Commission as permitting or requiring access to nuclear power facilities or access to or control over nuclear material.

The State Bureau of Investigation shall charge a reasonable fee to defray the administrative costs of providing criminal history record information for purposes of employment application screening. The State Bureau of Investigation is authorized to retain fees charged pursuant to this section and to expend those fees in accordance with the State Budget Act for the purpose of discharging its duties under this section. (1979, c. 796; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1212, s. 10; 2013-410, s. 6.1.)

§ 62-334: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-335: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-336: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-337: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-338: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-339: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-340: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-341: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-342: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-343: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-344: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-345: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-346: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-347: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-348: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 62-349: Reserved for future codification purposes.

Article 17.

Miscellaneous Provisions.

§ 62-350. (See Editor's note) Regulation of pole attachments.

(a) A municipality, or a membership corporation organized under Chapter 117 of the General Statutes, that owns or controls poles, ducts, or conduits, but which is exempt from regulation under section 224 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, shall allow any communications service provider to utilize its poles, ducts, and conduits at just, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory rates, terms, and conditions adopted pursuant to negotiated or adjudicated agreements. A request to utilize poles, ducts, or conduits under this section may be denied only if there is insufficient capacity or for reasons of safety, reliability, and generally applicable engineering principles, and those limitations cannot be remedied by rearranging, expanding, or otherwise reengineering the facilities at the reasonable and actual cost of the municipality or membership corporation to be reimbursed by the communications service provider. In granting a

request under this section, a municipality or membership corporation shall require the requesting entity to comply with applicable safety requirements, including the National Electrical Safety Code and the applicable rules and regulations issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Any fees due from a communications service provider accessing or attaching to poles, ducts, or conduits under this section must be billed by separate invoice and shall not be bundled with charges for electric service.

(b) Following receipt of a request from a communications service provider, a municipality or membership corporation shall negotiate concerning the rates, terms, and conditions for the use of or attachment to the poles, ducts, or conduits that it owns or controls. Following a request from a party to an existing agreement made pursuant to the terms of the agreement or made within 120 days prior to or following the end of the term of the agreement, the communications service provider and the municipality or membership corporation which is a party to that agreement shall negotiate concerning the rates, terms, and conditions for the continued use of or attachment to the poles, ducts, or conduits owned or controlled by one of the parties to the agreement. The negotiations shall include matters customary to such negotiations, including a fair and reasonable rate for use of facilities, indemnification by the attaching entity for losses caused in connection with the attachments, and the removal, replacement, or repair of installed facilities for safety reasons. Upon request, a party shall state in writing its objections to any proposed rate, terms, and conditions of the other party.

(c) In the event the parties are unable to reach an agreement within 90 days of a request to negotiate pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, or if either party believes in good faith that an impasse has been reached prior to the expiration of the 90-day period, either party may initiate proceedings to resolve the dispute before the Commission. The Commission shall have exclusive jurisdiction over proceedings arising under this section and shall adjudicate disputes arising under this section on a case-by-case basis. The Commission shall not exercise general ratemaking authority over communication service provider utilization of municipal or membership corporation facilities. This section does not impact or expand the Commission's authority under G.S. 62-133.5(h) or (m). The Public Staff may, at the discretion of the Commission, be made a party to any proceedings under this section as may be appropriate to serve the using and consuming public. The parties shall identify with specificity in their respective filings the issues in dispute. The Commission, in its discretion, may consider any evidence or ratemaking methodologies offered or proposed by the parties and shall resolve any dispute identified in the filings consistent with the public interest and necessity so as to derive just and reasonable rates, terms, and conditions. The Commission shall apply any new rate adopted as a result of the action retroactively to the date immediately following the expiration of the 90-day negotiating period or initiation of the proceeding, whichever is earlier. If the new rate is for the continuation of an existing agreement, the new rate shall apply retroactively to the date immediately following the end of the existing agreement. Prior to initiating any proceedings under this subsection, a party must pay any undisputed fees related to the use of poles, ducts, or conduits which are due and owing under a preexisting agreement with the municipality or membership corporation. In any proceeding brought under this subsection, the Commission may resolve any existing disputes regarding fees alleged to be owing under a preexisting agreement or regarding safety compliance arising under subsection (d) of this section. The provisions of this section do not apply to an entity whose poles, ducts, and conduits are subject to regulation under section 224 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.

(d) In the absence of an agreement between an attaching party and the involved municipality or membership corporation that provides otherwise, the following shall apply:

(1) When the lines, equipment, or attachments of a communications service provider that are attached to the poles, ducts, or conduits of a municipality or membership corporation do not comply with applicable safety rules and regulations set forth in subsection (a) of this section, the municipality or membership corporation may provide written notice of the noncompliant lines, equipment, or attachments, and make demand that the communications service provider bring such lines, equipment, and attachments into compliance with the specified safety rules and regulations. Within the 60-day period following the date of the notice and demand, the communications service provider shall either contest the notice of noncompliance in writing or bring its lines, equipment, and attachments into compliance with the specified applicable safety rules and regulations. If the work required to bring the facilities into compliance is not reasonably capable of being completed within the 60-day period, the period for compliance shall be extended as may be deemed reasonable under the circumstances so long as the communications service provider promptly commences and diligently pursues within the 60-day period such actions as are reasonably necessary to cause the facilities to be brought into compliance.

(2) When the communications service provider or, if applicable, another responsible attaching party fails to bring any noncompliant lines, equipment, or attachments into compliance (i) within the 60-day period following the date of notice and demand pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, or (ii) within 120 days following the date of notice and demand when the period is extended pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, the municipality or membership corporation shall be entitled to take such remedial actions as are reasonably necessary to bring the lines, equipment, and attachments of the communications service provider into compliance, including removal of the lines, equipment, or attachments should removal be required to achieve compliance with the applicable safety rules and regulations.

(3) A municipality or membership corporation that removes or brings into compliance the noncompliant lines, equipment, or attachments of a communications service provider pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection shall be entitled to recover its reasonable and actual costs for such activities from the communications service provider or other attaching party whose action or inaction caused the noncompliance, and the responsible attaching party shall reimburse the municipality or membership corporation within 45 days of being billed for such costs.

(4) All attaching parties shall work cooperatively to determine the causation of, and to effectuate any remedy for, noncompliant lines, equipment, and attachments. In the event of disputes under this subsection, the involved municipality or membership corporation or any attaching party may initiate proceedings to resolve any dispute before the Commission. The Commission shall have exclusive jurisdiction over proceedings arising under this section and shall adjudicate disputes arising under this section on a case-by-case basis. The Commission shall not exercise general ratemaking authority over

communication service provider utilization of municipal or membership corporation facilities. This section does not impact or expand the Commission's authority under G.S. 62-133.5(h) or (m). The Public Staff may, at the discretion of the Commission, be made a party to any proceedings under this section as may be appropriate to serve the using and consuming public. The Commission shall resolve such disputes consistent with the public interest and necessity. Nothing herein shall prevent a municipality or membership corporation from taking such action as may be necessary to remedy any exigent issue which is an imminent threat of death or injury to persons or damage to property.

(e) For purposes of this section, the term "communications service provider" means a person or entity that provides or intends to provide: (i) telephone service as a public utility under Chapter 62 of the General Statutes or as a telephone membership corporation organized under Chapter 117 of the General Statutes; (ii) broadband service, but excluding broadband service over energized electrical conductors owned by a municipality or membership corporation; or (iii) cable service over a cable system as those terms are defined in Article 42 of Chapter 66 of the General Statutes.

(f) The Commission may adopt such rules as it deems necessary to exercise its responsibility to adjudicate any disputes arising under this section.

(g) Nothing herein shall preclude a party from bringing civil action in the appropriate division of the General Court of Justice seeking enforcement of an agreement concerning the rates, terms, and conditions for the use of or attachment to the poles, ducts, or conduits of a municipality or membership corporation.

(h) As part of final adjudication, the Commission may assess the costs, not to exceed ten thousand dollars ($10,000), of adjudicating a dispute under this section against the parties to the dispute proceeding. If the Public Staff is a party to a dispute proceeding and the Executive Director of the Public Staff deems it necessary to hire expert witnesses or other individuals with professional expertise to assist the Public Staff in the dispute proceeding, the Commission may assess such additional costs incurred by the Public Staff by allocating such costs against the parties to the dispute proceeding. (2009-278, s. 1; 2015-119, ss. 1-5; 2021-23, s. 25.)

§ 62-351. Demand-side management policy; pilot project.

(a) Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State for government-owned facilities that have backup or emergency generators that meet the criteria of utility demand-side management programs or rates to enroll in such programs or rates to the extent those programs or rates are available without diminishing the purpose or use of the facility having the backup or emergency generator.

(b) Department of Public Safety Pilot Program. – By no later than January 1, 2018, the Department of Public Safety shall designate a backup or emergency generator to enroll in the demand-side management program or rate available that would allow electricity load to be shifted to its generator in response to utility-administered programs.

(c) Report. – The Department of Public Safety shall report to the Joint Legislative Commission on Energy Policy by January 31 of each year on the status of the designated backup or emergency generator and whether it is enrolled in the utility demand-side response program or rate.

(d) Sunset. – The pilot program and report required by subsections (b) and (c) of this section shall expire on January 1, 2020. (2017-192, s. 9.)

§ 62-352. Facilities for hearings outside the Commission's offices; security; costs of hearings.

The senior resident superior court judge shall provide suitable facilities for the conduct of hearings under this Chapter in the county or counties within the judge's district at the time the Commission schedules hearings therein. The senior resident superior court judge shall provide or arrange for security at the Commission hearings upon the request of the chair. The Commission shall promptly reimburse the court system or the local government, as the case may be, for the actual costs of conducting the hearings, and the Commission may charge such costs to the involved utility or utilities in cases involving class A or B utilities. (2021-23, s. 20.)