

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 1999

HOUSE BILL 1289
RATIFIED BILL

AN ACT TO SET THE PUBLIC UTILITY REGULATORY FEES, TO SET THE INSURANCE REGULATORY CHARGE, TO IMPOSE THE INSURANCE REGULATORY CHARGE ON SERVICE CORPORATIONS AND ON HEALTH MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE YEAR 2000, TO ALLOW THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES TO IMPOSE FEES THAT REFLECT THE ACTUAL COST OF RENDERING THE SERVICE, AND TO LIMIT THE FEE THAT AN APPLICANT MUST PAY FOR A WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION THAT IS REQUIRED FOR A PERMIT UNDER THE COASTAL AREA MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1974.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. The percentage rate to be used in calculating the public utility regulatory fee under G.S. 62-302(b)(2) is nine-hundredths percent (0.09%) of each public utility's North Carolina jurisdictional revenues earned during each quarter that begins on or after July 1, 1999.

Section 2. The annual fee imposed on The North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation under G.S. 62-302(b1), as enacted by House Bill 476, 1999 General Assembly, S.L. 1999-180, for the 1999-2000 fiscal year is two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000).

Section 3. The percentage rate to be used in calculating the insurance regulatory charge under G.S. 58-6-25 is seven percent (7%) for the 1999 calendar year.

Section 4. G.S. 58-6-25 reads as rewritten:

"§ 58-6-25. Insurance regulatory charge.

(a) Charge Levied. – There is levied on each insurance company an annual charge for the purposes stated in subsection (d) of this section. ~~As used in this section, the term "insurance company" means a company that pays the gross premiums tax levied in G.S. 105-228.5 and G.S. 105-228.8, except a service corporation subject to Article 65 of this Chapter. A health maintenance organization subject to Article 67 of this Chapter is not subject to those taxes and is therefore not subject to the charge levied in this section.~~ The charge levied in this section is in addition to all other fees and taxes. The percentage rate of the charge is established pursuant to subsection (b) of this section. For each insurance company that is not an Article 65 corporation nor a health maintenance organization, the rate is applied to charge shall be at a percentage rate of the company's premium tax liability for the taxable year. For Article 65 corporations and health maintenance organizations, the rate is applied to a presumed premium tax liability for the taxable year calculated as if the corporation or organization were an insurer providing health insurance. In determining an insurance company's premium tax liability for a taxable year, the following shall be disregarded:

- (1) Additional taxes imposed by G.S. 105-228.8.
- (2) The additional local fire and lightning tax imposed by G.S. 105-228.5(d)(4).
- (3) Any tax credits for guaranty or solvency fund assessments under G.S. 105-228.5A or G.S. 97-133(a).
- (4) Any tax credits allowed under Chapter 105 of the General Statutes other than tax payments made by or on behalf of the taxpayer.

(b) Rates. – ~~The rate of the charge for the 1991 taxable year shall be six and five-tenths percent (6.5%). For subsequent taxable years, the rate each taxable year shall be~~ the percentage rate established by the General Assembly. When the Department prepares its budget request for each upcoming fiscal year, the Department shall propose a percentage rate of the charge levied in this section. The Governor shall submit that proposed rate to the General Assembly each fiscal year. The General Assembly shall set by law the percentage rate of the charge levied in this section. The percentage rate may not exceed the rate necessary to generate funds sufficient to defray the estimated cost of the operations of the Department for each upcoming fiscal year, including a reasonable margin for a reserve fund. The amount of the reserve may not exceed one-third of the estimated cost of operating the Department for each upcoming fiscal year. In calculating the amount of the reserve, the General Assembly shall consider all relevant factors that may affect the cost of operating the Department or a possible unanticipated increase or decrease in North Carolina premiums or other charge revenue.

(c) Returns; When Payable. – The charge levied on each health maintenance organization is payable March 15 following the end of each calendar year. The charge levied on each insurance company other than a health maintenance organization is payable at the time the insurance company remits its premium tax. If the insurance company is required to remit installment payments of premiums tax under G.S. 105-228.5 for a taxable year, it shall also remit installment payments of the charge levied in this section for that taxable year at the same time and on the same basis as the premium tax installment payments. Each installment payment shall be equal to at least thirty-three and one-third percent (33.3%) of the insurance company's regulatory charge liability incurred in the immediately preceding taxable year.

Every insurance company shall, on or before the date the charge levied in this section is due, file a return on a form prescribed by the Secretary of Revenue. The return shall state the company's total North Carolina premiums or presumed premiums for the taxable year and shall be accompanied by any supporting documentation that the Secretary of Revenue may by rule require.

(d) Use of Proceeds. – The Insurance Regulatory Fund is created in the State treasury, under the control of the Office of State Budget and Management. The proceeds of the charge levied in this section and all fees collected under Articles 69 through 71 of this Chapter and under Articles 9 and 9C of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes shall be credited to the 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 may be spent only pursuant to appropriation by the General Assembly and in accordance with the line item budget enacted by the General Assembly. The Fund is subject to the provisions of the Executive Budget Act, except that no unexpended surplus of the Fund shall revert to the General Fund. All money credited to the Fund shall be used to reimburse the General Fund for the following:

- (1) Money appropriated to the Department of Insurance to pay its expenses incurred in regulating the insurance industry and other industries in this State.
- (2) Money appropriated to State agencies to pay the expenses incurred in regulating the insurance industry, in certifying statewide data processors under Article 11A of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes, and in purchasing reports of patient data from statewide data processors certified under that Article.
- (3) Money appropriated to the Department of Revenue to pay the expenses incurred in collecting and administering the taxes on insurance companies levied in Article 8B of Chapter 105 of the General Statutes.

(e) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:

- (1) Article 65 corporation. – Defined in G.S. 105-228.3.

(2) Insurance company. – A company that pays the gross premiums tax levied in G.S. 105-228.5 and G.S. 105-228.8 or a health maintenance organization.

(3) Insurer. – Defined in G.S. 105-228.3."

Section 5. G.S. 106-6.1 reads as rewritten:

"§ 106-6.1. Fees not to exceed actual cost. Fees.

~~Fees or charges established by any board or commission within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for services rendered or for duties performed shall not exceed the actual cost to the Department of rendering such service or performing such duty. As used herein, "cost" shall mean expenses incurred for mileage, subsistence, postage, computer time, salaries, materials, supplies, or other similar expenses which are incurred as a direct result of rendering the service or performing the duty. As used herein, "cost" shall not include fixed overhead expenses such as buildings, equipment, machinery, or other similar expenses which are indirectly related to a particular service or duty. A board or commission within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services may establish fees or charges for the services it provides. The Board of Agriculture, subject to the provisions of Chapter 146 of the General Statutes, may establish a rate schedule for the use of facilities operated by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.~~"

Section 6. G.S. 143-215.3D(e) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(7) Limit Water Quality Certification Fee Required for CAMA Permit. – An applicant for a permit under Article 7 of Chapter 113A of the General Statutes for which a water quality certification is required shall pay a fee established by the Secretary. The Secretary shall not establish a fee that exceeds the greater of the fee for a permit under Article 7 of Chapter 113A of the General Statutes or the fee for a water quality certification under subdivision (3) or (4) of this subsection."

Section 7. Section 4 of this act becomes effective 1 January 2000, and applies to the insurance regulatory charge levied for the 2000 calendar year. Section 6 of this act becomes effective 1 August 1999. The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 20th day of July, 1999.

Dennis A. Wicker
President of the Senate

James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives

James B. Hunt, Jr.
Governor

Approved _____ .m. this _____ day of _____ , 19