

§ 106-549.68. Powers of Commissioner; subpoenas; mandamus; self-incrimination; penalties.

- (a) The Commissioner shall also have power:
- (1) To gather and compile information concerning and, to investigate from time to time the organization, business, conduct, practices, and management of any person engaged in intrastate commerce, and the relation thereof to other persons;
 - (2) To require, by general or special orders, persons engaged in intrastate commerce, or any class of them, or any of them to file with the Commissioner, in such form as the Commissioner may prescribe, annual or special, or both annual and special, reports or answers in writing to specific questions, furnishing to the Commissioner such information as he may require as to the organization, business, conduct, practices, management, and relation to other persons of the person filing such reports or answers in writing. Such reports and answers shall be made under oath, or otherwise, as the Commissioner may prescribe, and shall be filed with the Commissioner within such reasonable period as the Commissioner may prescribe, unless additional time be granted in any case by the Commissioner.
- (b)
- (1) For the purposes of this Article the Commissioner shall at all reasonable times have access to, for the purpose of examination, and the right to copy, any documentary evidence of any person being investigated or proceeded against, and may require by subpoena the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of all documentary evidence of any person relating to any matter under investigation. The Commissioner may sign subpoenas and may administer oaths and affirmations, examine witnesses, and receive evidence.
 - (2) Such attendance of witnesses, and the production of such documentary evidence, may be required at any designated place of hearing. In case of disobedience to a subpoena the Commissioner may invoke the aid of any court designated in G.S. 106-549.67 in requiring the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of documentary evidence.
 - (3) Any of the courts designated in G.S. 106-549.67 within the jurisdiction of which such inquiry is carried on may, in case of contumacy or refusal to obey a subpoena issued to any person, issue an order requiring such person to appear before the Commissioner or to produce documentary evidence if so ordered, or to give evidence touching the matter in question; and any failure to obey such order of the court may be punished by such court as a contempt thereof.
 - (4) Upon the application of the Attorney General of this State at the request of the Commissioner, the superior court shall have jurisdiction to issue writs or [of] mandamus commanding any person to comply with the provisions of this Article or any order of the Commissioner made in pursuance thereof.
 - (5) The Commissioner may order testimony to be taken by deposition in any proceeding or investigation pending under this Article at any stage of such proceeding or investigation. Such depositions may be taken before any person designated by the Commissioner and having power to administer oaths. Such testimony shall be reduced to writing by the person taking the deposition, or under his direction and shall then be subscribed by the

deponent. Any person may be compelled to appear and depose and to produce documentary evidence in the same manner as witnesses may be compelled to appear and testify and produce documentary evidence before the Commissioner as hereinbefore provided.

- (6) Witnesses summoned before the Commissioner shall be paid the same fees and mileage that are paid witnesses in the courts of this State, and witnesses whose depositions are taken and the persons taking the same shall severally be entitled to the same fees as are paid for like services in such courts.
 - (7) No person shall be excused from attending and testifying or from producing books, papers, schedules of charges, contracts, agreements, or other documentary evidence before the Commissioner or in obedience to the subpoena of the Commissioner whether such subpoena be signed or issued by him or his delegate, or in any cause or proceeding, criminal or otherwise, based upon or growing out of any alleged violation of this Article, or of any amendments thereto, on the ground or for the reason that the testimony or evidence, documentary or otherwise, required of him or it may tend to incriminate him or it or subject him or it to a penalty or forfeiture; but no individual shall be prosecuted or subjected to any penalty or forfeiture for or on account of any transaction, matter, or thing concerning which he is compelled, after having claimed his privilege against self-incrimination, to testify or produce evidence, documentary or otherwise, except that any individual so testifying shall not be exempt from prosecution and punishment for perjury committed in so testifying.
- (c)
- (1) Any person that shall neglect or refuse to attend and testify or to answer any lawful inquiry, or to produce documentary evidence, if in his or its power to do so, in obedience to the subpoena or lawful requirement of the Commissioner shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.
 - (2) Any person that shall willfully make, or cause to be made, any false entry or statement of fact in any report required to be made under this Article, or that shall willfully make, or cause to be made, any false entry in any account, record, or memorandum kept by any person subject to this Article or that shall willfully neglect or fail to make, or to cause to be made, full, true, and correct entries in such accounts, records, or memoranda, of all facts and transactions appertaining to the business of any person subject to this Article or that shall willfully remove out of the jurisdiction of this State, or willfully mutilate, alter, or by any other means falsify any documentary evidence of any such person, or that shall willfully refuse to submit to the Commissioner or to any of his authorized agents, for the purpose of inspection and taking copies, any documentary evidence of any person subject to this Article in his or its possession or within his or its control, shall be deemed guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.
 - (3) If any person required by this Article to file any annual or special report shall fail so to do within the time fixed by the Commissioner for filing the same, and such failure shall continue for 30 days after notice of such default, such person shall forfeit to this State the sum of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for each and every day of the continuance of such failure, which forfeiture shall be payable into the general fund of this State, and shall be recoverable in a civil suit in the name of the State brought in the superior court where the person has his or its principal office or in any county in

which he or it shall do business. It shall be the duty of the Attorney General of this State, to prosecute for the recovery of such forfeitures. The costs and expenses of such prosecution shall be paid out of the amount recovered in such action.

- (4) Any officer or employee of this State who shall make public any information obtained by the Commissioner without his authority, unless directed by a court, shall be deemed guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1971, c. 677, s. 21; 1993, c. 539, ss. 803-805; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 14, s. 55; c. 24, s. 14(c).)