

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009

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SENATE BILL 698
Commerce Committee Substitute Adopted 5/12/09
House Committee Substitute Favorable 6/25/09

Short Title: City/County/Sanitary District Fees/Internet.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 24, 2009

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT REQUIRING THAT CITIES, COUNTIES, SANITARY DISTRICTS, AND
3 WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITIES GIVE ELECTRONIC NOTICE OF THE
4 IMPOSITION OF CERTAIN NEW FEES AND INCREASES IN CERTAIN EXISTING
5 FEES AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD WHEN THE IMPOSITION OR
6 INCREASE OF THOSE FEES IS CONSIDERED.

7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8 SECTION 1. Article 5 of Chapter 153A of the General Statutes is amended by
9 adding a new section to read:

10 "**§ 153A-102.1. Electronic notice of new fees and fee increases; public comment period.**

11 (a) If a county has a Web site maintained by one or more of its employees, the county
12 shall provide notice of the imposition of or increase in fees or charges levied in connection with
13 Article 18 of this Chapter or public enterprises as defined in G.S. 153A-274(1) and (2) on the
14 county's Web site at least seven days prior to the first regular meeting where the imposition of
15 or increase in the fees or charges will be discussed.

16 (b) During the consideration of the imposition of or increase in fees or charges levied in
17 connection with Article 18 of this Chapter or public enterprises as defined in G.S. 153A-274(1)
18 and (2), the governing body of the county shall permit a period of public comment.

19 (c) This section shall not apply if the imposition of or increase in fees or charges is
20 contained in a budget filed in accordance with the requirements of G.S. 159-12."

21 SECTION 2. Article 1 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes is amended by
22 adding a new section to read:

23 "**§ 160A-4.1. Electronic notice of new fees and fee increases; public comment period.**

24 (a) If a city has a Web site maintained by one or more of its employees, the city shall
25 provide notice of the imposition of or increase in fees or charges levied in connection with
26 Article 19 of this Chapter or public enterprises as defined in G.S. 160A-311(2) and (3) on the
27 city's Web site at least seven days prior to the first regular meeting where the imposition of or
28 increase in the fees or charges will be discussed.

29 (b) During the consideration of the imposition of or increase in fees or charges levied in
30 connection with Article 19 of this Chapter or public enterprises as defined in G.S. 160A-311(2)
31 and (3), the governing body of the city shall permit a period of public comment.

32 (c) This section shall not apply if the imposition of or increase in fees or charges is
33 contained in a budget filed in accordance with the requirements of G.S. 159-12."

34 SECTION 3. Part 2 of Article 2 of Chapter 130A of the General Statutes is
35 amended by adding a new section to read:



1 **"§ 130A-64.1. Electronic notice of new or increased charges and rates; public comment**
2 **period.**

3 (a) If a sanitary district has a Web site maintained by one or more of its employees, the
4 sanitary district shall provide notice of the imposition of or increase in service charges or rates
5 for any service provided by the sanitary district on the sanitary district's Web site at least seven
6 days prior to the first meeting where the imposition of or increase in the charges or rates will be
7 discussed.

8 (b) During the consideration of the imposition of or increase in service charges or rates,
9 the governing body of the sanitary district shall permit a period of public comment.

10 (c) This section shall not apply if the imposition of or increase in service charges or
11 rates is contained in a budget filed in accordance with the requirements of G.S. 159-12."

12 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 162A-9 reads as rewritten:

13 **"§ 162A-9. Rates and charges; electronic notice; contracts for water or services; deposits;**
14 **delinquent charges.**

15 (a) An authority may establish and revise a schedule of rates, fees, and other charges for
16 the use of and for the services furnished or to be furnished by any water system or sewer
17 system or parts thereof owned or operated by the authority. The rates, fees, and charges
18 established under this subsection are not subject to supervision or regulation by any bureau,
19 board, commission, or other agency of the State or of any political subdivision.

20 Before an authority sets or revises rates, fees, or other charges for stormwater management
21 programs and structural or natural stormwater and drainage system service, the authority shall
22 hold a public hearing on the matter. At least seven days before the hearing, the authority shall
23 publish notice of the public hearing in a newspaper having general circulation in the area. An
24 authority may impose rates, fees, or other charges for stormwater management programs and
25 stormwater and drainage system service on a person even though the person has not entered
26 into a contract to receive the service.

27 Rates, fees, and charges shall be fixed and revised so that the revenues of the authority,
28 together with any other available funds, will be sufficient at all times:

- 29 (1) To pay the cost of maintaining, repairing, and operating the systems or parts
30 thereof owned or operated by the authority, including reserves for such
31 purposes, and including provision for the payment of principal of and
32 interest on indebtedness of a political subdivision or of political subdivisions
33 which payment shall have been assumed by the authority, and
34 (2) To pay the principal of and the interest on all bonds issued by the authority
35 under the provisions of this Article as the same shall become due and
36 payable and to provide reserves therefor.

37 The fees established under this subsection must be made applicable throughout the service
38 area. Schedules of rates, fees, charges, and penalties for providing stormwater management
39 programs and structural and natural stormwater and drainage system service may vary
40 according to whether the property served is residential, commercial, or industrial property, the
41 property's use, the size of the property, the area of impervious surfaces on the property, the
42 quantity and quality of the runoff from the property, the characteristics of the watershed into
43 which stormwater from the property drains, and other factors that affect the stormwater
44 drainage system. Rates, fees, and charges imposed under this subsection for stormwater
45 management programs and stormwater and drainage system service may not exceed the
46 authority's cost of providing a stormwater management program and a structural and natural
47 stormwater and drainage system. The authority's cost of providing a stormwater management
48 program and a structural and natural stormwater and drainage system includes any costs
49 necessary to assure that all aspects of stormwater quality and quantity are managed in
50 accordance with federal and State laws, regulations, and rules.

1 No stormwater utility fee may be levied under this subsection whenever two or more units
2 of local government operate separate stormwater management programs or separate structural
3 and natural stormwater and drainage system services in the same area within a county.
4 However, two or more units of local government may allocate among themselves the functions,
5 duties, powers, and responsibilities for jointly operating a stormwater management program
6 and structural and natural stormwater and drainage system service in the same area within a
7 county, provided that only one unit may levy a fee for the service within the joint service area.
8 For purposes of this subsection, a unit of local government shall include a regional authority
9 providing stormwater management programs and structural and natural stormwater and
10 drainage system services.

11 (a1) If an authority has a Web site maintained by one or more of its employees, the
12 authority shall provide notice of the imposition of or increase in rates, fees, and charges under
13 subsection (a) of this section on the authority's Web site at least seven days prior to the first
14 meeting where the imposition of or increase in the rates, fees, and charges will be discussed.
15 This subsection shall not apply if the imposition of or increase in rates, fees, and charges is
16 contained in a budget filed in accordance with the requirements of G.S. 159-12.

17 (b) Notwithstanding any of the foregoing provisions of this section, the authority may
18 enter into contracts relating to the collection, treatment or disposal of sewage or the purchase or
19 sale of water which shall not be subject to revision except in accordance with their terms.

20 (c) In order to insure the payment of such rates, fees and charges as the same shall
21 become due and payable, the authority may do the following in addition to exercising any other
22 remedies which it may have:

- 23 (1) Require reasonable advance deposits to be made with it to be subject to
24 application to the payment of delinquent rates, fees and charges.
- 25 (2) At the expiration of 30 days after any rates, fees and charges become
26 delinquent, discontinue supplying water or the services and facilities of any
27 water system or sewer system of the authority.
- 28 (3) Specify the order in which partial payments are to be applied when a bill
29 covers more than one service."

30 **SECTION 5.** This act becomes effective August 1, 2009.