

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2017

H

1

HOUSE BILL 1073

Short Title: Establish Econ. Dev. Energy Task Force. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Strickland, Dixon, J. Bell, and Brenden Jones (Primary Sponsors).

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Energy and Public Utilities, if favorable, Appropriations

June 1, 2018

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE ON NATURAL GAS INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESS.

Whereas, the development of natural gas infrastructure is essential to economic growth in North Carolina; and

Whereas, there are over 4,226 miles of natural gas transmission pipeline in North Carolina; and

Whereas, there are over 30,000 miles of natural gas distribution pipeline in North Carolina; and

Whereas, it is in the interest of rural areas to have access to natural gas across the State; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) There is established the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Natural Gas Infrastructure and Access (Task Force). The purpose of the Task Force is to review current statutorily established funds that are available for development of natural gas infrastructure to enhance economic development, and to make recommendations on whether any changes to these funds are needed or advisable, and whether appropriations of additional funds may be needed or advisable. The Task Force shall also examine any financial barriers to expansion or development of natural gas infrastructure and methods to incentivize extension of natural gas service. At a minimum, the Task Force shall examine the following issues:

- (1) Moneys currently available under G.S. 143B-437.021 (Natural gas economic development infrastructure), G.S. 143B-437.01 (Industrial Development Fund Utility Account), and G.S. 62-159 (Additional funding for natural gas expansion) (the Funds) and any funds or legislation relevant to natural gas infrastructure expansion or incentivization.
- (2) Historic funding levels for the Funds and historic expenditures from the Funds.
- (3) Current statutory eligibility criteria and application requirements for receipt of moneys under each fund, as well as guidelines adopted by the Department of Commerce pursuant to statute where relevant. In addition, the Task Force shall review and examine requirements for the appropriate protection of confidential and trade secret information submitted in any application or grant agreement for such fund, including the relevance of the information to the decision to award a grant.



- 1 (4) Current allowable uses for moneys available under each fund.
- 2 (5) Whether establishment of an additional fund is advisable and, if so, how such
- 3 funds should be administered, including whether a governing board should be
- 4 created for distribution of the funds.
- 5 (6) Provisions related to the development of natural gas infrastructure to enhance
- 6 economic development under G.S. 62-133.15 (Cost recovery for natural gas
- 7 economic development infrastructure).
- 8 (7) The current network for natural gas distribution in the State.
- 9 (8) The location of existing taps on natural gas pipelines that currently traverse
- 10 the State, taps slated for natural gas pipelines proposed to traverse the State,
- 11 and whether additional taps would be beneficial.
- 12 (9) Areas of the State in which additional natural gas infrastructure is needed to
- 13 promote economic development. In studying this issue, the Task Force shall
- 14 place particular emphasis on identifying such needs in counties of the State
- 15 through which natural gas pipelines traverse in order to maximize
- 16 opportunities for economic development that can be realized from the
- 17 presence of the pipeline, including rural and coastal areas through which
- 18 natural gas pipelines traverse.
- 19 (10) Opportunities for connecting new natural gas transmission lines into existing
- 20 natural gas infrastructure.
- 21 (11) Whether projects involving the delivery of liquefied natural gas (LNG) should
- 22 be considered infrastructure to enhance economic development eligible for
- 23 receipt of moneys from the Funds or eligible for receipt of moneys from any
- 24 additional fund that may be recommended for establishment by the Task
- 25 Force.
- 26 (12) Entities that may serve a role in marketing availability of funds for
- 27 development of natural gas infrastructure and rendering technical assistance
- 28 to potential applicants for such funds.
- 29 (13) Whether county governments should be given authority to issue bonds for
- 30 development of natural gas infrastructure to promote economic development
- 31 within their jurisdictions.
- 32 (14) Natural gas utilities' long-term contracts that require purchase of certain
- 33 volumes of natural gas relative to accounting for additional future "tap-ons"
- 34 for return on investment (ROI) purposes.
- 35 (15) Any another issue related to the development of natural gas infrastructure to
- 36 enhance economic development that the Task Force deems relevant.
- 37 **SECTION 1.(b)** The Task Force shall consist of 17 members, appointed as follows:
- 38 (1) Five members of the House of Representatives upon the recommendation of
- 39 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be a member
- 40 of the minority party.
- 41 (2) Five members of the Senate upon the recommendation of the President Pro
- 42 Tempore of the Senate, one of whom shall be a member of the minority party.
- 43 (3) The Commissioner of Agriculture or the Commissioner's designee, ex officio
- 44 and nonvoting.
- 45 (4) Two county commissioners, who are advisory and nonvoting, one of whom is
- 46 appointed upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of
- 47 Representatives and one of whom is appointed upon the recommendation of
- 48 the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.
- 49 (5) Two representatives of a local or regional economic development
- 50 commission, who are advisory and nonvoting, one of whom is appointed upon
- 51 the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and one

1 of whom is appointed upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore
2 of the Senate.

- 3 (6) Two representatives of an agricultural advocacy and outreach organization,
4 who are advisory and nonvoting, one of whom is appointed upon the
5 recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and one of
6 whom is appointed upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore
7 of the Senate.

8 **SECTION 1.(c)** The President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the
9 House of Representatives shall each appoint a cochair of the Task Force from among its
10 membership.

11 **SECTION 1.(d)** The Task Force shall meet upon the call of its cochairs. A quorum
12 of the Task Force is a majority of its members. No action may be taken except by a majority vote
13 at a meeting at which a quorum is present. The Task Force, while in the discharge of its official
14 duties, may exercise all powers provided for under G.S. 120-19 through G.S. 120-19.4. The Task
15 Force may contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services, as provided by
16 G.S. 120-32.02. If the Task Force hires a consultant, the consultant shall not be a State employee
17 or a person currently under contract with the State to provide services. Members of the Task
18 Force shall receive per diem, subsistence, and travel allowances as provided in G.S. 120-3.1. The
19 expenses of the Task Force shall be considered expenses incurred for the joint operation of the
20 General Assembly.

21 **SECTION 1.(e)** In conducting this study, the Task Force shall consult with
22 representatives of the Departments of Commerce and Transportation, the Utilities Commission,
23 the Local Government Commission, and the Golden LEAF Foundation.

24 **SECTION 1.(f)** The Legislative Services Officer shall assign professional and
25 clerical staff to assist the Task Force in its work. The Director of Legislative Assistants of the
26 House of Representatives and the Director of Legislative Assistants of the Senate shall assign
27 clerical support to the Task Force.

28 **SECTION 1.(g)** Meetings of the Task Force are authorized to begin on or after July
29 1, 2018. The Task Force shall submit a final report on the results of its study, including proposed
30 legislation, to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and
31 Economic Resources and the Joint Legislative Commission on Energy Policy on or before
32 December 1, 2018, by filing a copy of the report with the Office of the President Pro Tempore of
33 the Senate, the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Joint Legislative
34 Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources and the Joint
35 Legislative Commission on Energy Policy, and the Legislative Library. The Task Force shall
36 terminate on December 1, 2019, or upon the filing of its final report, whichever comes first.

37 **SECTION 1.(h)** The sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) in recurring funds for
38 the 2018-2019 fiscal year is appropriated from the unappropriated balance remaining in the
39 General Fund to support the activities of the Task Force.

40 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.