

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2021

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HOUSE BILL 211  
Committee Substitute Favorable 4/13/21  
Committee Substitute #2 Favorable 4/21/21  
Committee Substitute #3 Favorable 5/10/21  
PROPOSED SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE H211-PCS10661-TQ-43

Short Title: Social District/Common Area Clarifications.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 4, 2021

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO RECODIFY AND CLARIFY THE STATUTES GOVERNING COMMON AREA  
3 ENTERTAINMENT PERMITS AND SOCIAL DISTRICTS.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5  
6 COMMON AREA AND SOCIAL DISTRICT CONFORMING CHANGE FOR  
7 FORTIFIED WINE AND MIXED BEVERAGES

8 SECTION 1. G.S. 18B-301 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

9 "(b1) Possession in a Social District or Common Area. – It shall be lawful, without an ABC  
10 permit, for a person to possess an open container of fortified wine or spirituous liquor in a social  
11 district or a designated consumption area under a common area entertainment permit in  
12 compliance with the provisions of G.S. 18B-300.1 or G.S. 18B-1001.5, respectively."

13  
14 COMMON AREA ENTERTAINMENT PERMIT REVISIONS

15 SECTION 2.(a) G.S. 18B-1000(4a) is repealed.

16 SECTION 2.(b) G.S. 18B-1001(21) is repealed.

17 SECTION 2.(c) Article 10 of Chapter 18B of the General Statutes is amended by  
18 adding a new section to read:

19 "§ 18B-1001.5. Authorization of common area entertainment permit.

20 (a) Policy. – The intent of this section is to regulate open containers of alcoholic  
21 beverages that customers of a multi-tenant establishment take from a permittee's licensed  
22 premises into another area where consumption of the alcoholic beverages is allowed. This section  
23 shall not in any way limit the consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages otherwise  
24 allowed under this Chapter.

25 (b) Definitions. – For purposes of this section:

26 (1) Common area. – An indoor or outdoor portion of a multi-tenant establishment  
27 that is open to the public.

28 (2) Customer. – A person who purchases an alcoholic beverage from a permittee  
29 that is in a designated consumption area.

30 (3) Designated consumption area. – An indoor or outdoor common area on the  
31 premises of a multi-tenant establishment designated by the owner or property  
32 owners' association of the multi-tenant establishment for consumption of  
33 alcoholic beverages and either of the following:



\* H 2 1 1 - P C S 1 0 6 6 1 - T Q - 4 3 \*

- 1           a.     Any indoor or outdoor area of a permittee business that is contiguous  
2           to the designated common area.
- 3           b.     Any indoor or outdoor area of a non-permittee business that is  
4           contiguous to the designated common area and that chooses to allow  
5           customers to bring open containers of alcoholic beverages onto its  
6           premises.
- 7           (4)    Mixed-use development. – An integrated development containing both  
8           residential and nonresidential uses and adhering to a comprehensive plan and  
9           located on a single tract of land, or on two or more tracts of land which may  
10          be separated only by a privately maintained street or other right-of-way, or  
11          which may be contained in a single building.
- 12          (5)    Multi-tenant establishment. – A building or structure, or multiple buildings  
13          and structures on the same property, or within the same planned development  
14          project, that may be subject to a common declaration of restrictive covenants  
15          administered by a common property owners' association, and under common  
16          ownership, control, or property owners' association governance, that contains  
17          or contain multiple businesses that sell food, goods, services, or a combination  
18          of food, goods, and services, and that include or are connected by common  
19          areas. The term multi-tenant establishment includes a mixed-use  
20          development.
- 21          (6)    Non-permittee business. – A business that is a commercial tenant of a  
22          multi-tenant establishment and does not hold any ABC permit.
- 23          (7)    Permittee. – A business that is a tenant of a multi-tenant establishment and  
24          that holds any of the following permits issued by the Commission:
- 25           a.     An on-premises malt beverage permit issued pursuant to  
26           G.S. 18B-1001(1).
- 27           b.     An on-premises unfortified wine permit issued pursuant to  
28           G.S. 18B-1001(3).
- 29           c.     An on-premises fortified wine permit issued pursuant to  
30           G.S. 18B-1001(5).
- 31           d.     A mixed beverages permit issued pursuant to G.S. 18B-1001(10).
- 32           e.     A wine shop permit issued pursuant to G.S. 18B-1001(16).
- 33           f.     A distillery permit issued pursuant to G.S. 18B-1100(5).
- 34          (c)    Authorization. – A common area entertainment permit may be issued to the owner or  
35          property owners' association of a multi-tenant establishment that has at least two tenants  
36          anywhere within the multi-tenant establishment that are permittees. A customer of a permittee  
37          may exit the permittee's licensed premises with an open container of the alcoholic beverage sold  
38          by the tenant and consume the alcoholic beverage within the confines of any indoor or outdoor  
39          designated consumption area.
- 40          (d)    Designation of Areas Allowed for Consumption. – The owner or property owners'  
41          association of a multi-tenant establishment that holds a common area entertainment permit shall  
42          designate one or more areas as designated consumption areas. A designated consumption area  
43          may include the premises of any business that is open to customers, if the business chooses to  
44          allow outside alcoholic beverages on its premises during the days and hours set by the owner or  
45          property owners' association of the multi-tenant establishment pursuant to subsection (e) of this  
46          section. A permittee may be included in the designated consumption area even if it chooses to  
47          exclude open containers of alcoholic beverages purchased from other permittees. A designated  
48          consumption area may include privately maintained streets, parking spaces on privately  
49          maintained streets, sidewalks, and courtyards. Privately maintained streets and parking areas may  
50          be open to vehicular traffic during the dates and times when the designated consumption area is  
51          active. The boundaries of a designated consumption area must be marked in a way that clearly

1 indicates to customers where the boundaries of the designated consumption area are located, such  
2 as with conspicuous signage, in the discretion of the owner or property owners' association.  
3 Vertical delineated boundaries shall not be required to indicate the boundaries of a designated  
4 consumption area. The owner or property owners' association of the multi-tenant establishment  
5 shall submit to the Commission for review and approval (i) a plat or site map of the multi-tenant  
6 establishment property with the designated consumption areas clearly marked or (ii) a detailed  
7 map of the relevant building or buildings on the multi-tenant establishment property with the  
8 designated consumption area clearly marked. The Commission shall reject any plat or map  
9 submitted under this subsection that does not meet the requirements of this section. The owner  
10 or property owners' association of the multi-tenant establishment shall submit a plat or map as  
11 required under this subsection for each renewal of the permit issued under this section and at  
12 least 10 days prior to making any adjustments to a designated consumption area.

13 (e) Days and Hours When Consumption is Allowed. – Customer-purchased alcoholic  
14 beverages may only be consumed within designated consumption areas during the hours in which  
15 the alcoholic beverage may be sold under G.S. 18B-1004, and the owner or property owners'  
16 association of the multi-tenant establishment may further limit the days and times in which an  
17 alcoholic beverage may be consumed in a designated consumption area. The owner or property  
18 owners' association of the multi-tenant establishment shall post signs in conspicuous locations  
19 on the multi-tenant establishment property indicating the days and times in which a customer  
20 may consume alcoholic beverages in a designated consumption area.

21 (f) Open Containers Sold by Permittees. – A permittee located in a designated  
22 consumption area may sell open containers of alcoholic beverages and allow customers to exit  
23 the premises to the designated consumption area in accordance with the following requirements:

- 24 (1) The permittee shall only sell and serve alcoholic beverages on its licensed  
25 premises.
- 26 (2) The permittee shall only sell an open container of an alcoholic beverage for  
27 consumption in the designated consumption area and off the premises of the  
28 permittee in a container that meets all of the following requirements:
  - 29 a. The container clearly identifies the permittee from which the alcoholic  
30 beverage was purchased.
  - 31 b. The container clearly displays a logo or some other mark that is unique  
32 to the designated consumption area in which it will be consumed.
  - 33 c. No later than January 1, 2024, the container shall not be comprised of  
34 glass.
  - 35 d. The container displays, in no less than 12-point font, the statement,  
36 "Drink Responsibly – Be 21."
  - 37 e. The container shall not hold more than 16 fluid ounces.
- 38 (3) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize the sale and delivery  
39 of alcoholic beverage drinks in excess of the limitation set forth in  
40 G.S. 18B-1010.

41 (g) Limitations on Open Containers. – Unless open containers otherwise allowed by law  
42 are allowed in designated consumption areas by the owner or property owners' association of the  
43 multi-tenant establishment, the possession and consumption of an open container of an alcoholic  
44 beverage in a designated consumption area is subject to all of the following requirements:

- 45 (1) A customer may only possess and consume open containers of alcoholic  
46 beverages that were purchased from a permittee located in the designated  
47 consumption area.
- 48 (2) Customer-purchased open containers of alcoholic beverages in the designated  
49 consumption area shall only be in containers meeting the requirements set  
50 forth in subsection (f) of this section, except for open containers sold by a  
51 permittee for consumption on the permittee's premises.

1           (3) A customer may only possess and consume open containers of alcoholic  
2 beverages in the designated consumption area during the days and hours set  
3 by the owner or property owners' association of the multi-tenant establishment  
4 in accordance with subsection (e) of this section, not to exceed the hours for  
5 consumption authorized pursuant to G.S. 18B-1004.

6           (4) A customer shall not possess at one time open containers of alcoholic  
7 beverages in the designated consumption area in excess of the number of  
8 alcoholic beverages that may be sold and delivered by a retail permittee as set  
9 forth in G.S. 18B-1010.

10          (5) A customer shall dispose of any open container of an alcoholic beverage in  
11 the customer's possession prior to exiting the designated consumption area.

12          (6) Notwithstanding G.S. 18B-300 and G.S. 18B-301, a permittee or  
13 non-permittee business may allow a customer to possess and consume on the  
14 business's premises alcoholic beverages purchased from a permittee in the  
15 designated consumption area.

16          (h) Closed Containers. – A person, including a customer who is in possession of an open  
17 container of an alcoholic beverage authorized under this section, may possess alcoholic  
18 beverages in closed containers in a designated consumption area to the extent otherwise allowed  
19 by this Chapter.

20          (i) Responsibilities of Non-Permittee Businesses. – A non-permittee business that is part  
21 of a designated consumption area and that allows customers to bring alcoholic beverages onto its  
22 premises shall not be responsible for enforcement of this Chapter. All non-permittee businesses  
23 that are part of a designated consumption area and that allow customers to bring alcoholic  
24 beverages onto their premises shall clearly post signage on any exits that do not open to a  
25 designated consumption area indicating that alcoholic beverages may not be taken past that point.  
26 During the days and hours when the designated consumption area is active, a non-permittee  
27 business that allows customers to bring alcoholic beverages onto its premises shall allow law  
28 enforcement officers access to the areas of the premises accessible by customers.

29          (j) Responsibilities of Permit Holder. – The owner or property owners' association of a  
30 multi-tenant establishment shall comply with this section but shall not be responsible for  
31 enforcement of other sections of this Chapter. The Commission shall take no action against the  
32 owner or property owners' association of a multi-tenant establishment for violations of other  
33 sections of this Chapter unless the owner or property owners' association of the multi-tenant  
34 establishment knowingly committed the violation or knowingly allowed the violation to occur."  
35

## 36 SOCIAL DISTRICT REVISIONS

37           **SECTION 3.(a)** G.S. 18B-502(a) reads as rewritten:

38           "(a) Authority. – To procure evidence of violations of the ABC law, alcohol  
39 law-enforcement agents, employees of the Commission, local ABC officers, and officers of local  
40 law-enforcement agencies that have contracted to provide ABC enforcement under  
41 G.S. 18B-501(f) shall have authority to investigate the operation of each licensed premises for  
42 which an ABC permit has been issued, to make inspections that include viewing the entire  
43 premises, and to examine the books and records of the permittee. The inspection authorized by  
44 this section may be made at any time it reasonably appears that someone is on the premises.  
45 Alcohol law-enforcement agents are also authorized to be on the premises to the extent necessary  
46 to enforce the provisions of Article 68 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes. For purposes of  
47 this subsection, the phrase "licensed premises for which an ABC permit has been issued" includes  
48 a social district authorized under ~~G.S. 18B-904.1~~ G.S. 18B-300.1 and an extended area  
49 authorized under G.S. 18B-904(h)."

50           **SECTION 3.(b)** G.S. 18B-904(h)(8) reads as rewritten:

"(8) Except as allowed under ~~G.S. 18B-904.1~~ G.S. 18B-300.1 or to reenter the licensed premises, a person shall not exit an extended area with an alcoholic beverage purchased from the permittee."

**SECTION 3.(c)** G.S. 18B-904.1 is repealed.

**SECTION 3.(d)** G.S. 153A-145.9 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 153A-145.9. Authorization of social ~~district~~-districts.**

A county may adopt an ordinance designating ~~a one or more social district~~ districts for use in accordance with ~~G.S. 18B-904.1~~ G.S. 18B-300.1."

**SECTION 3.(e)** G.S. 160A-205.4 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 160A-205.4. Authorization of social ~~district~~-districts.**

A city may adopt an ordinance designating ~~a one or more social district~~ districts for use in accordance with ~~G.S. 18B-904.1~~ G.S. 18B-300.1."

**SECTION 3.(f)** Article 3 of Chapter 18B of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 18B-300.1. Authorization and regulation of social districts.**

(a) Policy. – The intent of this section is to regulate open containers of alcoholic beverages that customers of a permittee take from the permittee's licensed premises into another area where consumption of the alcoholic beverages is allowed. This section shall not in any way limit the consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages otherwise allowed under this Chapter.

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

(1) Customer. – A person who purchases an alcoholic beverage from a permittee that is in a social district.

(2) Non-permittee business. – A business that is located in a social district and does not hold any ABC permit.

(3) Permittee. – An establishment holding any of the following permits issued by the Commission:

a. An on-premises malt beverage permit issued pursuant to G.S. 18B-1001(1).

b. An on-premises unfortified wine permit issued pursuant to G.S. 18B-1001(3).

c. An on-premises fortified wine permit issued pursuant to G.S. 18B-1001(5).

d. A mixed beverages permit issued pursuant to G.S. 18B-1001(10).

e. A wine shop permit issued pursuant to G.S. 18B-1001(16).

f. A distillery permit issued pursuant to G.S. 18B-1100(5).

(4) Social district. – A defined area in which a person may consume alcoholic beverages sold by a permittee. A social district may include both indoor and outdoor areas of businesses within or contiguous to the defined area during the days and hours set by the local government by ordinance pursuant to subsection (d) of this section. A social district may include privately owned property, including permittees and non-permittee businesses, and multi-tenant establishments, as defined in G.S. 18B-1001.5, and public streets, crosswalks, or parking areas whether or not the streets or parking areas are closed to vehicle traffic.

(c) Local Ordinances Authorized. – Pursuant to G.S. 153A-145.9, a county may adopt an ordinance designating one or more social districts in the parts of the county outside any city. Pursuant to G.S. 160A-205.4, a city may adopt an ordinance designating one or more social districts.

(d) Requirements for Designation. – A social district designated under this section shall meet all of the following requirements:

- 1           (1)   The social district shall be clearly defined with signs posted in a conspicuous  
2           location indicating which area is included in the social district, the days and  
3           hours during which alcoholic beverages may be consumed in the social  
4           district, the telephone number for the ALE Division and the local law  
5           enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the area comprising the social  
6           district, and a clear statement that an alcoholic beverage purchased from a  
7           permittee for consumption in a social district shall (i) only be consumed in the  
8           social district and (ii) be disposed of before the person in possession of the  
9           alcoholic beverage exits the social district. The hours set by a city or county  
10           during which customer-purchased alcoholic beverages may be consumed in a  
11           social district shall be in accordance with G.S. 18B-1004.
- 12           (2)   The city or county, or the city's or county's designee, shall establish or approve  
13           management and maintenance plans for the social district and post these plans,  
14           along with a rendering of the boundaries of the social district and days and  
15           hours during which alcoholic beverages may be consumed in the social  
16           district, on the website for the city or county. The city's or county's designee  
17           may include a private entity, including a property owner or property owner's  
18           association. Any plan established under this subdivision shall be approved by  
19           the governing body of the city or county. The social district shall be  
20           maintained in a manner that protects the health and safety of the general  
21           public. The city or county may establish guidelines in the ordinance  
22           establishing the social district or in its management and maintenance plan to  
23           allow for suspension of regular days and hours of alcohol consumption in all  
24           or part of a social district during events requiring other permits pursuant to  
25           subsection (j) of this section.
- 26           (3)   Before allowing consumption of alcoholic beverages in a social district, the  
27           city or county shall submit to the Commission a detailed map of the social  
28           district with the boundaries of the social district clearly marked, and the days  
29           and hours during which alcoholic beverages may be consumed in the social  
30           district. The city or county shall only be required to submit a revised map to  
31           the Commission if the city or county amends the geographic footprint of a  
32           social district. A permittee may be included in the social district even if it  
33           chooses to exclude open containers of alcoholic beverages purchased from  
34           other permittees in the social district.
- 35           (4)   The city or county, or the city's or county's designee, shall develop or approve  
36           uniform signs indicating that a non-permittee business is included in the social  
37           district and allows alcoholic beverages on its premises when the social district  
38           is active and distribute the signs to non-permittee businesses that are included  
39           in the social district. The city's or county's designee may include a private  
40           entity, including a property owner or property owner's association. The signs  
41           may be in the form of a sticker, placard, or other format as deemed appropriate  
42           by the city or county. A participating non-permittee business shall display the  
43           uniform sign at all times during the times when the social district is active. A  
44           customer may not bring an alcoholic beverage into a non-permittee business  
45           that does not display the uniform sign. No non-permittee business shall be  
46           required to participate or be included in a social district or to allow customers  
47           to bring alcohol onto its premises.

48           (e)   Open Containers Sold by Permittees. – A permittee located in a social district may  
49           sell open containers of alcoholic beverages and allow customers to exit its licensed premises to  
50           the social district in accordance with the following requirements:

- 1           (1)   The permittee shall only sell and serve alcoholic beverages on its licensed  
2           premises.
- 3           (2)   The permittee shall only sell an open container of an alcoholic beverage for  
4           consumption in the social district and off the premises of the permittee in a  
5           container that meets all of the following requirements:
- 6           a.     The container clearly identifies the permittee from which the alcoholic  
7           beverage was purchased.
- 8           b.     The container clearly displays a logo or some other mark that is unique  
9           to the social district in which it will be consumed.
- 10          c.     The container is not comprised of glass.
- 11          d.     The container displays, in no less than 12-point font, the statement,  
12          "Drink Responsibly – Be 21."
- 13          e.     The container shall not hold more than 16 fluid ounces.
- 14          (3)   Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize the sale and delivery  
15          of alcoholic beverage drinks in excess of the limitation set forth in  
16          G.S. 18B-1010.
- 17          (f)   Limitations on Open Containers. – Except where otherwise allowed by local  
18          ordinance, the possession and consumption of an open container of an alcoholic beverage in a  
19          social district is subject to all of the following requirements:
- 20               (1)   A customer may only possess and consume open containers of alcoholic  
21               beverages that were purchased from a permittee located in the social district.
- 22               (2)   Customer-purchased open containers of alcoholic beverages in the social  
23               district shall only be in containers meeting the requirements set forth in  
24               subsection (e) of this section, except for open containers sold by a permittee  
25               for consumption on the permittee's premises.
- 26               (3)   A customer may only possess and consume open containers of alcoholic  
27               beverages in the social district during the days and hours set by the city or  
28               county in accordance with subsection (b) of this section, not to exceed the  
29               hours for consumption authorized pursuant to G.S. 18B-1004.
- 30               (4)   A customer shall not possess at one time open containers of alcoholic  
31               beverages in the social district in excess of the number of alcoholic beverages  
32               that may be sold and delivered by a retail permittee as set forth in  
33               G.S. 18B-1010.
- 34               (5)   A customer shall dispose of any open container of an alcoholic beverage  
35               purchased from a permittee in the customer's possession prior to exiting the  
36               social district unless the customer is reentering the licensed premises of the  
37               permittee where the customer purchased the alcoholic beverage.
- 38               (6)   Notwithstanding G.S. 18B-300 and G.S. 18B-301, a permittee or  
39               non-permittee business may allow a customer to possess and consume on the  
40               business's premises alcoholic beverages purchased from a permittee in the  
41               social district.
- 42          (g)   Limitations on Closed Containers. – A person, including a customer who is in  
43          possession of an open container of an alcoholic beverage authorized under this section, may  
44          possess alcoholic beverages in closed containers in a social district to the extent allowed by law.
- 45          (h)   Responsibilities of Non-Permittee Businesses. – A non-permittee business that is part  
46          of a social district and that allows customers to bring alcoholic beverages onto its premises shall  
47          not be responsible for enforcement of this Chapter. All non-permittee businesses that are part of  
48          a social district and that allow customers to bring alcoholic beverages onto their premises shall  
49          clearly post signage on any exits that do not open to the social district indicating that alcoholic  
50          beverages may not be taken past that point. During the days and hours when the social district is  
51          active, a non-permittee business that allows customers to bring alcoholic beverages onto its

1 premises shall allow law enforcement officers access to the areas of the premises accessible by  
2 customers.

3 (i) Multi-Tenant Establishments Located in a Social District. – Permittees and  
4 non-permittee businesses in a multi-tenant establishment located within a social district may  
5 participate in the social district regardless of whether the multi-tenant establishment has a  
6 common area entertainment permit.

7 (j) Interaction with Other Permits. – The Commission shall issue permits for special  
8 events occurring partially or entirely within the boundaries of a social district as follows:

9 (1) The Commission may issue special one-time permits pursuant to  
10 G.S. 18B-1002(a)(2) or (a)(5) for events occurring on premises located  
11 partially or entirely within the boundaries of a social district. If the event is  
12 scheduled to occur during hours when alcoholic beverages may be consumed  
13 in the social district, the event permittee shall, in addition to obtaining such  
14 signed law enforcement notification as may be required under the  
15 Commission's rules, include in such notification a statement that the event is  
16 to occur in a social district during days and hours designated for consumption  
17 of alcoholic beverages.

18 (2) A permittee holding a winery special event permit, malt beverage special  
19 event permit, or spirituous liquor special event permit pursuant to  
20 G.S. 18B-1114.1, 18B-1114.5, and 18B-1114.7, respectively, may sell and  
21 serve products at special events taking place in a social district.

22 (3) A permittee holding a mixed beverages catering permit pursuant to  
23 G.S. 18B-1001(12) may serve spirituous liquor to guests at events taking place  
24 in a social district."

## 25 26 **ALLOW AGREEMENTS BETWEEN CONTIGUOUS SOCIAL DISTRICTS AND** 27 **COMMON AREA ENTERTAINMENT PERMITTEES**

28 **SECTION 4.** Article 3 of Chapter 18B of the General Statutes is amended by adding  
29 a new section to read:

30 **"§ 18B-300.2. Interaction between contiguous social districts and common area**  
31 **entertainment permittees.**

32 If the boundary of a social district directly borders a designated consumption area established  
33 by the owner or property owners' association of a multi-tenant establishment that holds a common  
34 area entertainment permit, the owner or property owners' association of the multi-tenant  
35 establishment and the local government that designated the social district may enter into a  
36 memorandum of understanding signed by both parties that allows open containers approved for  
37 possession and consumption in the designated consumption area to be possessed and consumed  
38 in the social district, and open containers approved for possession and consumption in the social  
39 district to be possessed and consumed in the designated consumption area during days and hours  
40 when both the social district and the designated consumption area are active. All requirements of  
41 G.S. 18B-300.1 and G.S. 18B-1001.5 shall apply when a customer takes an alcoholic beverage  
42 from a social district to a designated consumption area that is contiguous to or within the social  
43 district or from a designated consumption area to a social district that is contiguous to or  
44 overlapping with the designated consumption area. A customer may not take a container  
45 comprised of glass from a designated consumption area to a contiguous social district or the area  
46 of an overlapping social district that is outside the designated consumption area. The holder of  
47 the common area entertainment permit shall submit to the Commission a copy of the  
48 memorandum of understanding signed by both parties. Either party may terminate a  
49 memorandum of understanding by notifying the other party and the Commission in writing of  
50 the termination."



1 **EFFECTIVE DATE**

2 **SECTION 5.** This act is effective when it becomes law.