

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL 730  
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Short Title: Ratepayer Protection Act.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 26, 2025

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH REQUIREMENTS FOR SITING AND OPERATION OF DATA  
3 CENTERS AND TO MAKE VARIOUS CHANGES TO STATE ENERGY AND  
4 UTILITIES POLICY.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6  
7 **PART I. REQUIREMENTS FOR DATA CENTERS**

8  
9 **REQUIREMENTS FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL PROCESS**

10 **SECTION 1.(a)** Article 9 of Chapter 160D of the General Statutes is amended by  
11 adding a new section to read:

12 **"§ 160D-974. Site assessment required for data centers; other requirements.**

13 (a) Prior to any approval of a rezoning application, special exception, or conditional or  
14 special use permit for the siting of a new data center, a local government shall require that an  
15 applicant:

16 (1) Perform and submit a site assessment to examine the sound profile of the data  
17 center on residential units and schools located within 500 feet of the data  
18 center property boundary. A locality may also require that a site assessment  
19 examine the effect of the proposed facility on the community with regard to  
20 (i) ground and surface water resources, (ii) air quality, (iii) thermal plumes,  
21 (iv) agricultural resources, (v) parks, (vi) registered historic sites, and (vii)  
22 forestland on the data center site or immediately contiguous land.

23 (2) Submit an attestation that the data center will employ a closed-loop water or  
24 a liquid cooling system that will result in minimization of water consumption  
25 for cooling systems to the maximum extent possible, in compliance with  
26 G.S. 143-355.5A.

27 (b) The site assessment submitted to a local government pursuant to subdivision (1) of  
28 subsection (a) of this section shall be used by the local government to assess consistency with  
29 the policies of the local government's comprehensive plan, if any, and compliance with the local  
30 government's adopted noise ordinances, zoning ordinance provisions, and other applicable laws  
31 and regulations, if any.

32 (c) This section shall not apply to a site with an existing legislative, quasi-judicial, or  
33 administrative approval where an applicant is seeking an expansion or modification of an already  
34 existing or approved facility and such expansion does not exceed an additional monthly electrical  
35 demand of 100 megawatts or more.



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1       (d) For purposes of this section, the term "data center" means a facility, campus of  
2 facilities, or array of interconnected facilities used by an entity or other business enterprise to  
3 operate, manage, or maintain a computer, group of computers, or other organized assembly of  
4 hardware and software for the primary purpose of processing, storing, retrieving, or transmitting  
5 data and that has a peak monthly electricity demand of 100 megawatts or greater.

6       (e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit, limit, or otherwise supersede  
7 existing local zoning authority."

8       **SECTION 1.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to  
9 applications for rezoning, special exceptions, or conditional or special use permits submitted on  
10 or after that date.

## 11 **CLOSED-LOOP WATER OR LIQUID COOLING SYSTEMS FOR DATA CENTERS**

12       **SECTION 2.(a)** Article 38 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes is amended by  
13 adding a new section to read:

### 14 **"§ 143-355.5A. Closed-loop water system required for data centers.**

15       (a) A data center must employ a closed-loop water or a liquid cooling system that will  
16 result in minimization of water consumption for cooling systems to the maximum extent possible.

17       (b) A data center may not employ evaporative or open-loop cooling systems.

18       (c) In accordance with G.S. 160D-974, the owner of a proposed data center must submit  
19 a certification that the facility will employ a closed-loop or a liquid cooling system resulting in a  
20 minimization of water consumption for cooling systems to the maximum extent possible, at the  
21 time it applies for approval of a rezoning application, special exception, or special use permit for  
22 the siting of the data center. In addition, the data center shall annually file a certification to include  
23 third-party verification that the closed-loop cooling system remains operational, with  
24 documentation of any water losses, chemical treatment processes, and fluid replacement  
25 volumes.

26       (d) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

27       (1) Closed-loop water or liquid cooling system. – A sealed cooling process in  
28 which the same water or coolant circulates continuously with de minimis  
29 withdrawal from or discharge into municipal systems, groundwater sources,  
30 or surface waters.

31       (2) Data center. – A facility, campus of facilities, or array of interconnected  
32 facilities used by an entity or other business enterprise to operate, manage, or  
33 maintain a computer, group of computers, or other organized assembly of  
34 hardware and software for the primary purpose of processing, storing,  
35 retrieving, or transmitting data and that has a peak monthly electricity demand  
36 of 100 megawatts or greater."

37       **SECTION 2.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to data  
38 centers for which construction commences on or after that date.

## 39 **PROHIBIT CERTAIN FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF DATA CENTERS AND LAND** 40 **UPON WHICH DATA CENTERS ARE SITED**

41       **SECTION 3.(a)** Chapter 64 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new  
42 Article to read:

### 43 "Article 5.

44 "Prohibit Adversarial Foreign Government Ownership of Data Centers and Land on which Data  
45 Centers are Located.

### 46 **"§ 64-64. Definitions.**

47 As used in this Article, the following definitions apply:

48       (1) Adversarial nation. – One of the following:

49       a. China.

- 1                    b.      Iran.  
2                    c.      North Korea.  
3                    d.      Russia.  
4                    (2)   Data center. – A facility, campus of facilities, or array of interconnected  
5                    facilities used by an entity or other business enterprise to operate, manage, or  
6                    maintain a computer, group of computers, or other organized assembly of  
7                    hardware and software for the primary purpose of processing, storing,  
8                    retrieving, or transmitting data and that has a peak monthly electricity demand  
9                    of 100 megawatts or greater.  
10                   (3)   De minimis direct interest. – Any ownership of land or a data center resulting  
11                   from ownership of registered equities in a publicly traded company owning  
12                   the land or data center and if the ownership interest in the company is either  
13                   of the following:  
14                   a.      Less than five percent (5%) of any class of registered equities.  
15                   Ownership of registered equities is determined by processes  
16                   established under federal law.  
17                   b.      Less than five percent (5%) interest in an entity controlled by a  
18                   company that is both registered with the United States Securities and  
19                   Exchange Commission as an investment adviser under the Investment  
20                   Advisers Act of 1940, as amended, and is not a foreign entity.  
21                   (4)   Foreign government. – Any government other than the federal government or  
22                   the government of a state or a political subdivision of a state.  
23                   (5)   Interest. – Any estate, remainder, or reversion, or any portion of the estate,  
24                   remainder, or reversion, or an option pursuant to which one party has a right  
25                   to cause the transfer of legal or equitable title to land described in  
26                   G.S. 64-65(a), including, without limitation, a lease of land described in  
27                   G.S. 64-65(a) (i) for a term of one year or longer or (ii) renewable by option  
28                   for terms which, if the options were all exercised, would total one year or  
29                   longer.  
30                   (6)   Party. – Any individual, corporation, company, association, firm, partnership,  
31                   society, joint-stock company, trust, estate, or any other legal entity.  
32                   (7)   Prohibited foreign party. – Any of the following:  
33                   a.      A citizen or resident of an adversarial nation.  
34                   b.      A foreign government formed within an adversarial nation.  
35                   c.      A party other than an individual or government that is created or  
36                   organized under the laws of a foreign government within an  
37                   adversarial nation.  
38                   d.      A party other than an individual or a government that meets all of the  
39                   following criteria:  
40                   1.      Is created or organized under the laws of any state.  
41                   2.      A significant interest or substantial control is directly or  
42                   indirectly held or is capable of being exercised by one or more  
43                   of the following:  
44                   I.      An individual referred to in sub-subdivision a. of this  
45                   subdivision.  
46                   II.     A foreign government referred to in sub-subdivision b.  
47                   of this subdivision.  
48                   III.    A party referred to in sub-subdivision c. of this  
49                   subdivision.  
50                   IV.    A combination of the individuals, parties, or  
51                   governments referred to in this sub-sub-subdivision.

- 1 e. An agent, trustee, or other fiduciary of a person or entity enumerated  
2 in this subdivision.
- 3 f. This definition does not apply to an entity that meets either of the  
4 following criteria:
- 5 1. The entity has received a determination from the Committee of  
6 Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) that there are  
7 no unresolved national security concerns with respect to the  
8 entity in connection to a matter submitted to CFIUS and which  
9 CFIUS concluded all action pursuant to section 721 of the  
10 Defense Production Act of 1950, as amended.
- 11 2. The entity has a national security agreement with CFIUS and  
12 maintains the validity of such national security agreement.
- 13 (8) Residence. – A person's principal dwelling place where that person intends to  
14 remain permanently for an indefinite period of time.
- 15 (9) Resident alien. – A person who is not a citizen of the United States and is a  
16 resident of one of the following:
- 17 a. A state of the United States.  
18 b. A territory of the United States.  
19 c. A trusteeship of the United States.  
20 d. A protectorate of the United States.
- 21 (10) Significant interest or substantial control. – Any interest, other than a de  
22 minimis direct interest, held by one or more of the following:
- 23 a. An individual referred to in sub-subdivision (7)a. of this section.  
24 b. A single government referred to in sub-subdivision (7)b. of this  
25 section.
- 26 c. A party referred to in sub-subdivision (7)c. of this section.  
27 d. A party referred to in sub-subdivision (7)d. of this section.

28 **"§ 64-65. Prohibited foreign party ownership of data centers and land on which a data**  
29 **center is located prohibited.**

30 (a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, no adversarial nation shall  
31 either:

- 32 (1) Purchase, acquire, lease, or hold any interest in land on which a data center is  
33 located.
- 34 (2) Have any significant interest in or substantial control of a data center.

35 (b) Except as provided in this section, a prohibited foreign party shall not acquire by  
36 grant, purchase, devise, descent, or otherwise any interest, other than a de minimis direct interest,  
37 in land described in subsection (a) of this section or a data center in this State. A party may not  
38 knowingly hold land, or a significant interest in or substantial control of a data center, as an agent,  
39 trustee, or other fiduciary for a prohibited foreign party in violation of this section. A prohibited  
40 foreign party that acquires land, or holds a significant interest in or substantial control of a data  
41 center, in violation of this section remains in violation as long as the prohibited foreign party  
42 holds an interest in the land, or the significant interest in or substantial control of a data center.  
43 A prohibited foreign party who is a resident alien of the United States shall have the right to  
44 acquire and hold land described in subsection (a) of this section, or a significant interest in or  
45 substantial control of a data center, in the State upon the same terms as a citizen of the United  
46 States during the continuance of the party's residence in this State.

47 (c) A prohibited foreign party that has acquired any interest in land described in  
48 subsection (a) of this section, or a significant interest in or substantial control of a data center, in  
49 this State prior to the effective date of this section may continue to own or hold that interest but  
50 may not acquire by grant, purchase, devise, descent, or otherwise any additional interest in land  
51 described in subsection (a) of this section, or a significant interest in or substantial control of a

1 data center, in this State and must register with the Secretary of State and the Attorney General.  
2 The Secretary of State and the Attorney General shall maintain one joint database of those foreign  
3 parties that have registered, and the database shall be accessible and searchable by the public on  
4 each agency's website. The Secretary of State and the Attorney General shall establish a  
5 registration form for the purposes of this subsection, and the form shall include at least the  
6 following information:

- 7 (1) The name of the owner of the land or the owner of the interest in the land, or  
8 the owner of the data center, as applicable.
- 9 (2) The address of the land, the parcel identification number, and the property's  
10 legal description, or the address of the data center, as applicable.
- 11 (3) The number of acres of the land on which the data center is located.
- 12 (4) The mailing address of the owner of the land or the data center, as applicable.
- 13 (5) Country of citizenship and residency status or country of incorporation of the  
14 owner of the land or the owner of the interest in the land, or the owner of the  
15 data center, as applicable.

16 (d) A prohibited foreign party that fails to timely file a registration with the Secretary of  
17 State and the Attorney General pursuant to subsection (c) of this section is subject to a civil  
18 penalty of not less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for each day that the registration is late,  
19 the clear proceeds of which shall be remitted to the Civil Fines and Forfeitures Fund, in  
20 accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2. The unpaid balance of any penalties assessed under this  
21 subsection shall constitute a lien against the land if a lien, denoted as a Notice of Foreign  
22 Ownership Violation Lien, has been recorded by the Attorney General in the office of the register  
23 of deeds in the county where the property is located, and the lien shall have priority from the date  
24 and time of recordation and shall be enforced by the Attorney General.

25 (e) A prohibited foreign party that acquires land described in subsection (a) of this  
26 section, or a significant interest in or substantial control of a data center, on or after the effective  
27 date of this section, by devise or descent, through the enforcement of security interests, or through  
28 the collection of debts, other than a de minimis direct interest, shall sell, transfer, or otherwise  
29 divest itself of the land within three years after acquiring the land, or the significant interest in or  
30 substantial control of the data center.

31 (f) At the time of purchase, a buyer of any interest in land described in subsection (a) of  
32 this section shall provide an affidavit signed under penalty of perjury attesting that the buyer is  
33 (i) not a prohibited foreign party and (ii) in compliance with the requirements of this section. The  
34 affidavit is not required to be notarized and shall be attached as an exhibit to the deed or other  
35 document that conveys an ownership interest in the land. The failure to obtain or maintain the  
36 affidavit shall not affect the title or insurability of the title for the land, and shall not result in civil  
37 or criminal liability to any person or entity, unless the person or entity is in violation of subsection  
38 (k) of this section herein, or subject any nonparty to the purchase to civil or criminal liability,  
39 unless a nonparty to the purchase has actual knowledge that the transaction will result in a  
40 violation of this section. The Real Estate Commission shall establish the form for the affidavit  
41 required under this subsection.

42 (g) Upon receipt of information that leads the Attorney General to believe that a  
43 prohibited foreign party has not divested itself of the land described in subsection (a) of this  
44 section, or a significant interest in or substantial control of a data center, as required under  
45 subsection (e) of this section, the Attorney General shall enforce a violation of this section by  
46 commencing a receivership proceeding in the county where the property or data center is situated  
47 under Article 38A of Chapter 1 of the General Statutes seeking the appointment of a general  
48 receiver pursuant to G.S. 1-507.24(e1). Any interest in real property acquired or held in violation  
49 of this section shall be subject to divestiture pursuant to G.S. 64-66.

1        (h) A violation of this section by an adversarial nation may, at the discretion of the  
2 noteholder, be deemed a default under a loan, mortgage, or deed of trust and shall provide the  
3 lender the automatic right to trigger default on the loan, mortgage, or deed of trust.

4        (i) The responsibility for determining whether an individual or other entity is subject to  
5 this Article, pursuant to either civil or criminal law, rests solely with the State of North Carolina  
6 and no other individual or entity.

7        (j) Title to land described in subsection (a) of this section is not invalid or subject to  
8 divestiture due to a violation of this section by any former owner or any other person holding or  
9 owning a former interest in the land described in subsection (a) of this section.

10       (k) A party who knowingly sells an interest in land described in subsection (a) of this  
11 section in violation of this section or who has actual knowledge that the transaction will result in  
12 a violation of this section but aids and abets a party in knowingly selling an interest in land  
13 described in subsection (a) of this section shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. It is an  
14 affirmative defense to prosecution under this subsection that a prohibited foreign party is a  
15 resident alien of this State.

16       (l) An individual or other entity who is not a prohibited foreign party shall bear no civil  
17 or criminal liability for failing to determine or make inquiry of whether an individual or other  
18 entity is a prohibited foreign party.

19       (m) This Article does not create or authorize a private right of action to enforce the  
20 provisions of this Article.

21 **"§ 64-66. Divestiture procedure.**

22       (a) Upon receipt of information that leads the Attorney General to believe that a violation  
23 of G.S. 64-65 may have occurred, the Attorney General shall investigate the alleged violation  
24 and may issue subpoenas requiring any of the following:

- 25           (1) Appearances of witnesses.  
26           (2) Production of relevant records.  
27           (3) Giving of relevant testimony.

28       (b) The Attorney General shall enforce a violation of G.S. 64-65 by commencing a  
29 receivership proceeding under Article 38A of Chapter 1 of the General Statutes seeking the  
30 appointment of a general receiver pursuant to G.S. 1-507.24(e1). The following apply to a  
31 receivership proceeding initiated pursuant to this section:

- 32           (1) Proceeds of the sale shall be paid as follows:  
33           a. The costs of the receivership and sale.  
34           b. To secured parties, in their order of priority, except for liens which  
35           under the terms of the sale are to remain on the property.  
36           c. No proceeds shall be distributed from the receivership sale to the  
37           prohibited foreign party. Any excess proceeds are forfeited and shall  
38           be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with  
39           G.S. 115C-457.2.  
40           (2) At the receivership sale, any secured party shall be able to place a bid in an  
41           amount that is not more than the amount owed plus any costs incurred to the  
42           secured party as of the date of the sale, as established in the court order for the  
43           sale of the property.  
44           (3) Upon commencement of an action under this section, the Attorney General  
45           shall file a notice of lis pendens as soon as practicable with the register of  
46           deeds of the county or counties in which the real property is situated. Upon  
47           the entry of an order for the sale of the property under this section, the  
48           Attorney General shall record a copy of the order as soon as practicable in the  
49           office of the register of deeds of the county or counties where the real property  
50           is situated.

1           (4) The receiver shall honor and give priority to any default that has been  
2           triggered on a loan, mortgage, or deed of trust prior to the commencement of  
3           a receivership under this section."

4           **SECTION 3.(b)** Article 2 of Chapter 161 of the General Statutes is amended by  
5 adding a new section to read:

6 **"§ 161-14.04. Citizenship and residential status of parties to a deed or conveyance.**

7           When recording a deed or other document that conveys an ownership interest in land  
8           described by G.S. 64-65(a), the register of deeds shall attach the affidavit as an exhibit to the  
9           deed or other document that conveys an ownership interest in land as required by G.S. 64-65(f)  
10           according to the requirements of G.S. 161-22."

11           **SECTION 3.(c)** G.S. 1-507.24 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

12           "(e1) Receiver for Sale of Real Property Owned by Prohibited Foreign Party. – A general  
13           receiver may be appointed for the purpose of conducting a sale of real property in accordance  
14           with G.S. 64-66 upon a finding by the court that an interest in the real property is held by a  
15           prohibited foreign party in violation of G.S. 64-65(a)."

16           **SECTION 3.(d)** This section becomes effective December 1, 2026. Subsection (a)  
17 of this section applies to offenses committed on or after that date.

18  
19 **REQUIREMENTS FOR UTILITY SERVICE CONTRACTS WITH DATA CENTERS**

20           **SECTION 4.(a)** Article 7 of Chapter 62 of the General Statutes is amended by adding  
21 a new section to read:

22 **"§ 62-142.1. Contracts with data centers.**

23           (a) Each contract between an electric public utility and a data center for the provision of  
24           electric service shall include terms and conditions designed to protect residential, other retail,  
25           and wholesale electricity customers from costs associated with data center construction and  
26           operation, and prevent cross-subsidization between customer classes to the maximum extent  
27           possible, including all of the following:

28           (1) Minimum billing requirements designed to recover incremental costs  
29           associated with serving or preparing to serve a data center.

30           (2) A minimum contract term of 15 years.

31           (3) Performance and credit provisions designed to protect retail customers in the  
32           event of contract default.

33           (4) Termination provisions designed to protect retail customers in the event of  
34           termination of the contract for electric service.

35           (b) Each contract between an electric public utility and a data center for the provision of  
36           electric service shall be filed with the Commission as soon as practicable but in no event later  
37           than 30 days from the date of contract execution by both parties. Either the utility or the data  
38           center, or both, may designate all or any portion of a contract as confidential information as  
39           defined in G.S. 132-1.2, or sensitive public security information as defined in G.S. 132-1.7.  
40           Information shall be considered confidential only to the extent provided by law. Any dispute  
41           about whether information has been properly designated as confidential shall be determined by  
42           the Commission upon motion and response of interested parties. Subject to the requirements of  
43           G.S. 62-34(c), the Public Staff shall have the right to examine confidential information, as well  
44           as sensitive public security information, in exercising any power or performing any duty  
45           authorized by this Chapter.

46           (c) As part of the report required on the long-range needs for the expansion of facilities  
47           for the generation of electricity pursuant to G.S. 62-110.1(c), the electric public utility shall  
48           include detail on contracted demand versus actual demand for each data center for the previous  
49           three years.

50           (d) As used in this section, the term "data center" means a facility, campus of facilities,  
51           or array of interconnected facilities used by an entity or other business enterprise to operate,

1 manage, or maintain a computer, group of computers, or other organized assembly of hardware  
 2 and software for the primary purpose of processing, storing, retrieving, or transmitting data and  
 3 that has a peak monthly electricity demand of 100 megawatts or greater."

4 SECTION 4.(b) This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to  
 5 agreements between an electric utility and a data center entered into on or after that date.

6  
 7 **NO CONDEMNATION FOR DATA CENTERS**

8 SECTION 5. Article 1 of Chapter 40A of the General Statutes is amended by adding  
 9 a new section to read:

10 **"§ 40A-14. No condemnation to facilitate siting of data center.**

11 Notwithstanding any authority granted under this Chapter, no condemnor shall exercise the  
 12 power of eminent domain for the purpose of acquiring land for a data center to be sited upon."

13  
 14 **NO LOCAL GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES FOR DATA CENTERS**

15 SECTION 6.(a) G.S. 158-7.1 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

16 "(i) Notwithstanding subsection (a), (b), or (d) of this section, local governments are  
 17 prohibited from providing any economic development incentives for siting of a data center within  
 18 their jurisdiction. For purposes of this section, the term "data center" means a facility, campus of  
 19 facilities, or array of interconnected facilities used by an entity or other business enterprise to  
 20 operate, manage, or maintain a computer, group of computers, or other organized assembly of  
 21 hardware and software for the primary purpose of processing, storing, retrieving, or transmitting  
 22 data and that has a peak monthly electricity demand of 100 megawatts or greater."

23 SECTION 6.(b) This section is effective when it becomes law and shall not be  
 24 construed to impair agreements for incentives executed on or before that date.

25  
 26 **PART II. ENERGY POLICY PROVISIONS**

27  
 28 **COST CAP FOR CEPS SET-ASIDES**

29 SECTION 7.(a) G.S. 62-133.8 reads as rewritten:

30 **"§ 62-133.8. Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (CEPS).**

31 ...

32 (d) Compliance With CEPS Requirement Through Use of Solar Energy Resources. – For  
 33 calendar year 2018 and for each calendar year thereafter, at least two-tenths of one percent (0.2%)  
 34 of the total electric power in kilowatt hours sold to retail electric customers in the State, or an  
 35 equivalent amount of energy, shall be supplied by a combination of new solar electric facilities  
 36 and new metered solar thermal energy facilities that use one or more of the following  
 37 applications: solar hot water, solar absorption cooling, solar dehumidification, solar thermally  
 38 driven refrigeration, and solar industrial process heat. The terms of any contract entered into  
 39 between an electric power supplier and a new solar electric facility or new metered solar thermal  
 40 energy facility shall be of sufficient length to stimulate development of solar energy; provided,  
 41 the Commission shall develop a procedure to determine if an electric power supplier is in  
 42 compliance with the provisions of this subsection if a new solar electric facility or a new metered  
 43 solar thermal energy facility fails to meet the terms of its contract with the electric power supplier.  
 44 As used in this subsection, "new" means a facility that was first placed into service on or after  
 45 January 1, 2007. The electric power suppliers shall comply with the requirements of this  
 46 subsection according to the following ~~schedule~~:schedule, if the incremental costs to comply with  
 47 this subsection do not exceed two hundred percent (200%) of the cost to supply, or contract for  
 48 supply, an equivalent percentage of total electric power in kilowatt hours sold to retail electric  
 49 customers in the State using any other clean energy resource:

50 Calendar Year	Requirement for Solar Energy Resources
51 2010	0.02%

1	2012	0.07%
2	2015	0.14%
3	2018	0.20%

4 (e) Compliance With CEPS Requirement Through Use of Swine Waste Resources. – For  
 5 calendar year 2018 and for each calendar year thereafter, at least two-tenths of one percent (0.2%)  
 6 of the total electric power in kilowatt hours sold to retail electric customers in the State shall be  
 7 supplied, or contracted for supply in each year, by swine waste. The electric power suppliers, in  
 8 the aggregate, shall comply with the requirements of this subsection according to the following  
 9 ~~schedule:~~schedule, if the incremental costs to comply with this subsection do not exceed two  
 10 hundred percent (200%) of the cost to supply, or contract for supply, an equivalent percentage of  
 11 total electric power in kilowatt hours sold to retail electric customers in the State using any other  
 12 clean energy resource:

13	Calendar Year	Requirement for Swine Waste Resources
14	2012	0.07%
15	2015	0.14%
16	2018	0.20%

17 (f) Compliance With CEPS Requirement Through Use of Poultry Waste Resources. –  
 18 For calendar year 2014 and for each calendar year thereafter, at least 900,000 megawatt hours of  
 19 the total electric power sold to retail electric customers in the State or an equivalent amount of  
 20 energy shall be supplied, or contracted for supply in each year, by poultry waste combined with  
 21 wood shavings, straw, rice hulls, or other bedding material. The electric power suppliers, in the  
 22 aggregate, shall comply with the requirements of this subsection according to the following  
 23 ~~schedule:~~schedule, if the incremental costs to comply with this subsection do not exceed two  
 24 hundred percent (200%) of the cost to supply, or contract for supply, an equivalent amount of  
 25 megawatt hours sold to retail electric customers in the State using any other clean energy  
 26 resource:

27	Calendar Year	Requirement for Poultry Waste Resources
28	2012	170,000 megawatt hours
29	2013	700,000 megawatt hours
30	2014	900,000 megawatt hours

31 ...  
 32 (m) An electric power supplier shall satisfy the requirements of subsections (b) and (c) of  
 33 this section, as applicable, in compliance with current law and practice with respect to the least  
 34 cost planning for generation, pursuant to G.S. 62-2(a)(3a), in a manner that maintains or improves  
 35 upon the adequacy and reliability of the existing grid. Through application of least cost principles  
 36 to the requirements of this section, it is the goal of the General Assembly that the cap on per  
 37 account annual charges set forth in subdivision (4) of subsection (h) of this section shall be  
 38 reduced by fifty percent (50%) for all customer classes by 2035."

39 **SECTION 7.(b)** Nothing in this section shall be construed to impair any contract  
 40 executed on or before July 1, 2026, for purposes of complying with the requirements of  
 41 G.S. 62-133.8 as it existed prior to amendments enacted by subsection (a) of this section. All  
 42 reasonable and prudent incremental costs incurred by an electric power supplier to comply with  
 43 any former requirement of G.S. 62-133.8 may be recovered as provided in G.S. 62-133.8(h). For  
 44 the purposes of cost recovery under this section, reasonable and prudent incremental costs shall  
 45 include all of the following:

- 46 (1) Costs under purchase contracts for clean energy resources entered into prior  
 47 to July 1, 2026, for the purpose of complying with the clean energy portfolio  
 48 standard requirements.
- 49 (2) The costs of clean energy facilities built or acquired by an electric power  
 50 supplier for which a certificate of public convenience and necessity has been  
 51 issued by the Commission prior to July 1, 2026.

1  
2 **RFP FOR STUDY OF UTILITY POLICIES TO INCREASE AFFORDABILITY OF**  
3 **ELECTRIC RATES**

4 **SECTION 8.** Recognizing the rising costs of utility service, the General Assembly  
5 finds that an examination of various utility policies should be conducted to ensure these policies  
6 are not exacerbating affordability issues for citizens of the State, including the 2050 goal for a  
7 reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) emitted in the State from electric generating facilities that  
8 results in carbon neutrality, pursuant to G.S. 62-110.9. In addition to examining these existing  
9 utility policies, the General Assembly finds that expert analysis should be performed to determine  
10 the most effective approach to ensuring that costs of utility service to large load customers is not  
11 borne by other residential, commercial, and industrial customers in North Carolina, including the  
12 advisability of development of a large load tariff. The Legislative Services Officer shall issue a  
13 request for proposals for a study to be conducted by an entity with nationally recognized expertise  
14 in research and analysis of utility policy and rates to: (i) ascertain the current impacts, and  
15 projected impacts over the next 25 years, to residential, commercial, and industrial customer bills  
16 from the 2050 carbon neutrality goal, and whether any changes to this policy or other policies  
17 are advisable to enhance customer affordability; and (ii) provide recommendations for effective  
18 policies to prevent rate impacts from large load customers on other customer classes, including  
19 requirements that large load customers generate a portion of their own power, as well as  
20 curtailment policies for large load customers. The study shall adhere to the following time line:

- 21 (1) The request for proposals (RFP) shall be issued on or before August 1, 2026.  
22 (2) A contract to award the RFP shall be executed on or before November 1, 2026.  
23 (3) The study shall be completed and submitted to the Legislative Services Officer  
24 on or before May 1, 2027, in order to inform the development of utility policy  
25 during the 2027 Regular Session.

26 The Utilities Commission and the Public Staff shall assist the (i) Legislative Services  
27 Officer, as needed, in development of the RFP and the selection of a contractor and (ii) selected  
28 contractor, in every permissible manner within the constraints of their respective authority, in the  
29 conduct of the study.  
30

31 **EXPRESS PERMIT REVIEW FOR ENERGY PROJECTS**

32 **SECTION 9.(a)** G.S. 143B-279.13 reads as rewritten:

33 **"§ 143B-279.13. Express permit and certification reviews.**

34 (a) The Department of Environmental Quality shall develop an express review program  
35 to provide express permit and certification reviews in all of its regional offices. Participation in  
36 the express review program is voluntary, and the program shall be supported by the fees  
37 determined pursuant to subsection (b) of this section. The Department of Environmental Quality  
38 shall determine the project applications to review under the express review program from those  
39 who request to participate in the program. The express review program may be applied to any  
40 one or all of the permits, approvals, or certifications in the following programs: the erosion and  
41 sedimentation control program, the coastal management program, and the water quality  
42 programs, including water quality certifications and stormwater management. The express  
43 review program shall focus on the following permits or certifications:

- 44 (1) Stormwater permits under Part 1 of Article 21 of Chapter 143 of the General  
45 Statutes.  
46 (2) Stream origination certifications under Article 21 of Chapter 143 of the  
47 General Statutes.  
48 (3) Water quality certification under Article 21 of Chapter 143 of the General  
49 Statutes.  
50 (4) Erosion and sedimentation control permits under Article 4 of Chapter 113A  
51 of the General Statutes.

1 (5) Permits under the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA), Part 4 of Article  
2 7 of Chapter 113A of the General Statutes.

3 (a1) The Department of Environmental Quality shall have the authority to create express  
4 permitting options for programs in addition to those listed in subsection (a) of this section where  
5 it deems there to be a need or where it determines an express permitting option would create  
6 greater efficiencies for the permitting process.

7 (a2) The Department of Environmental Quality shall create an express review program for  
8 all permits, authorizations, and certifications required from the Department for projects involving  
9 the generation, distribution, or transmission of energy or fuel, including natural gas, diesel,  
10 petroleum, or electricity. Participation in the express review program is voluntary, and the  
11 program shall be supported by the fees determined pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

12 (b) The Department of Environmental Quality shall set the fees for express application  
13 review under the express review program at a level sufficient to cover all program expenses.  
14 Notwithstanding G.S. 143-215.3D, the maximum permit application fee to be charged under  
15 subsection (a) of this section for the express review of a project application requiring all of the  
16 permits under subdivisions (1) through (5) of subsection (a) of this section shall not exceed five  
17 thousand eight hundred eight dollars (\$5,808). Notwithstanding G.S. 143-215.3D, the maximum  
18 permit application fee to be charged for the express review of a project application requiring all  
19 of the permits under subdivisions (1) through (4) of subsection (a) of this section shall not exceed  
20 four thousand seven hundred fifty-two dollars (\$4,752). Notwithstanding G.S. 143-215.3D, the  
21 maximum permit application fee charged for the express review of a project application for any  
22 other combination of permits under subdivisions (1) through (5) of subsection (a) of this section  
23 shall not exceed four thousand two hundred twenty-four dollars (\$4,224). As set forth in  
24 subsection (a1) of this section, express review of a project application involving additional  
25 permits or certifications issued by the Department of Environmental Quality other than those  
26 under subdivisions (1) through (5) of subsection (a) of this section may be allowed by the  
27 Department, and, notwithstanding G.S. 143-215.3D or any other statute or rule that sets a permit  
28 fee, the maximum permit application fee charged for the express review of a project application  
29 that includes a permit, approval, or certification designated for express review under subsection  
30 (a1) of this section shall not exceed four thousand two hundred twenty-four dollars (\$4,224), plus  
31 one hundred fifty percent (150%) of the fee that would otherwise apply by statute or rule for that  
32 particular permit, approval, or certification. Additional fees, not to exceed fifty percent (50%)  
33 of the original permit application fee under this section, may be charged for subsequent reviews due  
34 to the insufficiency of the permit applications. The Department of Environmental Quality may  
35 establish the procedure by which the amount of the fees under this subsection is determined, and  
36 the fees and procedures are not rules under G.S. 150B-2(8a) for the express review program  
37 under this section."

38 **SECTION 9.(b)** G.S. 143B-279.20 reads as rewritten:

39 **"§ 143B-279.20. Report on Department activity to process applications for permits**  
40 **required for natural gas pipelines and gas-fired electric generation facilities.**

41 The Department of Environmental Quality shall report on any applications received for  
42 ~~permits~~ permits, authorizations, or certifications required for siting or operation of natural gas  
43 pipelines and gas-fired electric generation facilities within the State, and activities of the  
44 Department to process such applications, including tracking of processing times. The report shall  
45 also include information on all activities under the express review program required pursuant to  
46 G.S. 143B-279.13(a2). The processing time tracked shall include (i) the total processing time  
47 from when an initial permit application is received to issuance or denial of the permit and (ii) the  
48 processing time from when a complete permit application is received to issuance or denial of the  
49 permit. The Department shall report quarterly to the Joint Legislative Commission on Energy  
50 Policy pursuant to this section."

1           **SECTION 9.(c)** Within 30 days of the date this section becomes law, the Department  
2 shall notify applicants for all entities with pending applications for permits, authorizations, and  
3 certifications required from the Department for projects involving the generation, distribution, or  
4 transmission of energy or fuel, including natural gas, diesel, petroleum, or electricity, of the  
5 express review program enacted by subsection (b) of this section, and shall inform the applicants  
6 of the ability to process pending applications through the program upon payment of the applicable  
7 fee pursuant to G.S. 143B-279.13(b).

8           **SECTION 9.(d)** This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to  
9 applications for permits, authorizations, and certifications pending on or submitted after that date.

## 10 11 **REQUIRE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR RESOURCES PRIOR TO RETIREMENT** 12 **OF BASELOAD FACILITIES TO ENSURE ADEQUACY OF GRID**

13           **SECTION 10.** G.S. 62-110.9(4) reads as rewritten:

14           "(4) Retain discretion to determine optimal timing and generation and  
15 resource-mix to achieve the least cost path to compliance with the authorized  
16 carbon reduction goal, including discretion in achieving the authorized carbon  
17 reduction goal by the date specified in order to allow for implementation of  
18 solutions that would have a more significant and material impact on carbon  
19 reduction; provided, however, the Commission shall not exceed the date  
20 specified to achieve the authorized carbon reduction goal by more than two  
21 years, except in the event the Commission authorizes construction of a nuclear  
22 facility or wind energy facility that would require additional time for  
23 completion due to technical, legal, logistical, or other factors beyond the  
24 control of the electric public utility, or in the event necessary to maintain the  
25 adequacy and reliability of the existing grid. In making such determinations,  
26 the Utilities Commission shall receive and consider stakeholder input. The  
27 Commission shall not authorize retirement of a baseload electric generating  
28 facility until such time as a certificate of public convenience and necessity has  
29 been issued to an electric public utility for construction of a nuclear facility to  
30 ensure the adequacy of baseload generation from a clean energy resource."

## 31 32 **PART III. MISCELLANEOUS**

### 33 34 **COOLING OFF PERIOD FOR UTILITIES COMMISSION AND PUBLIC STAFF**

35           **SECTION 11.** Article 1 of Chapter 62 of the General Statutes is amended by adding  
36 a new section to read:

#### 37 **"§ 62-24. Restriction on subsequent employment by regulated utility.**

38           No employee of the Commission or Public Staff, or member of the Commission, or executive  
39 director of the Public Staff, may accept or begin employment with a utility regulated by the  
40 Commission within six months after separation from employment at the Commission or Public  
41 Staff, as applicable."

### 42 43 **EFFECTIVE DATE**

44           **SECTION 12.** If any section or provision of this act is declared unconstitutional or  
45 invalid by the courts, it does not affect the validity of this act as a whole or any part other than  
46 the part so declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.

47           **SECTION 13.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes  
48 law.