

Article 12.

Junkyard Control Act.

§ 136-141. Title of Article.

This Article may be cited as the Junkyard Control Act. (1967, c. 1198, s. 1.)

§ 136-142. Declaration of policy.

The General Assembly hereby finds and declares that although junkyards are a legitimate business, the establishment and use and maintenance of junkyards in the vicinity of the interstate and primary highways or within the vicinity of North Carolina routes in counties that have no interstate or federal aid primary highways within the State should be regulated and controlled in order to promote the safety, health, welfare and convenience and enjoyment of travel on and the protection of the public investment in highways within the State, to prevent unreasonable distraction of operators of motor vehicles and to prevent interference with the effectiveness of traffic regulations, to attract tourists and promote the prosperity, economic well-being and general welfare of the State, and to preserve and enhance the natural scenic beauty of the highways and areas in the vicinity. It is the intention of the General Assembly to provide and declare herein a public policy and statutory basis for regulation and control of junkyards. (1967, c. 1198, s. 2; 1993, c. 493, s. 1.)

§ 136-143. Definitions.

As used in this Article:

- (1) The term "automobile graveyard" shall mean any establishment or place of business which is maintained, used, or operated for storing, keeping, buying or selling wrecked, scrapped, ruined, or dismantled motor vehicles or motor vehicle parts. Any establishment or place of business upon which six or more unlicensed, used motor vehicles which cannot be operated under their own power are kept or stored for a period of 15 days or more shall be deemed to be an "automobile graveyard" within the meaning of this Article.
- (2) "Interstate system" means that portion of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways located within the State, as now officially designated, or as may hereafter be so designated as interstate system by the Department of Transportation, or other appropriate authorities. As to highways under construction so designated as interstate highways pursuant to the above procedures, the highway shall be a part of the interstate system for the purpose of this Article on the date the location of the highway has been approved finally by the appropriate federal authorities.
- (3) The term "junk" shall mean old or scrap copper, brass, rope, rags, batteries, paper, trash, rubber, debris, waste, or junked, dismantled or wrecked automobiles, or parts thereof, iron, steel, and other old or scrap ferrous or nonferrous material.
- (4) The term "junkyard" shall mean an establishment or place of business which is maintained, operated, or used for storing, keeping, buying, or selling junk, or for maintenance or operation of an automobile graveyard, and the term shall include garbage dumps and sanitary fills. An establishment or place of business which stores or keeps for a period of 15 days or more materials within the meaning of "junk" as defined by subdivision (3) of G.S. 136-143 which had

been derived or created as a result of industrial activity shall be deemed to be a junkyard within the meaning of this Article.

- (5) "Primary system" means that portion of connected main highways, as now officially designated, or as may hereafter be so designated as primary system by the Department of Transportation or other appropriate authorities. As to highways under construction so designated as federal-aid primary highways pursuant to the above procedures, the highway shall be part of the federal-aid primary system for purposes of this Article on the date the location of the highway has been approved finally by the appropriate federal or State authorities.
- (6) "Unzoned area" shall mean an area where there is no zoning in effect.
- (7) "Visible" means capable of being seen without visual aid by a person of normal visual acuity. (1967, c. 1198, s. 3; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; c. 1439, ss. 1-5; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1.)

§ 136-144. Restrictions as to location of junkyards.

No junkyard shall be established, operated or maintained, any portion of which is within 1,000 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way of any interstate or primary highway, or a North Carolina route in a county that has no interstate or federal aid primary highways, except the following:

- (1) Those which are screened by natural objects, plantings, fences or other appropriate means so as not to be visible from the main-traveled way of the highway at any season of the year or otherwise removed from sight or screened in accordance with the rules and regulations promulgated by the Department of Transportation.
- (2) Those located within areas which are zoned for industrial use under authority of law.
- (3) Those located within unzoned industrial areas, which areas shall be determined from actual land uses and defined by regulations to be promulgated by the Department of Transportation.
- (4) Those which are not visible from the main-traveled way of an interstate or primary highway or a North Carolina route in a county that does not have an interstate or federal aid primary highway at any season of the year. (1967, c. 1198, s. 4; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1; 1993, c. 493, s. 2.)

§ 136-145. Enforcement provisions.

Any person, firm, corporation or association that establishes, operates or maintains a junkyard within 1,000 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way of any interstate or primary highway, after the effective date of this Article as determined by G.S. 136-155, that does not come within one or more of the exceptions contained in G.S. 136-144 hereof, shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor, and each day that the junkyard remains within the prohibited distance shall constitute a separate offense. In addition thereto, said junkyard is declared to be a public nuisance and the Department of Transportation may seek injunctive relief in the superior court of the county in which the offense is committed to abate the said nuisance and to require the removal of all junk from the prohibited area. (1967, c. 1198, s. 5; 1973, c. 507, s. 5, c. 1439, s. 6; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1; 1993, c. 539, s. 999; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 136-146. Removal of junk from illegal junkyards.

Any junkyard established after the effective date of this Article as determined by G.S. 136-155, in violation of the provisions of this Article or rules and regulations issued by the Department of Transportation pursuant to this Article, shall be illegal and shall constitute a public nuisance. The Department of Transportation or its agents shall give 30 days' notice to the owner of said junkyard to remove the junk or to make the junkyard to conform to the provisions of this Article or rules and regulations promulgated by the Department of Transportation hereunder. The Department of Transportation or its agents may remove the junk from the illegal junkyard at the expense of the owner if the said owner fails to act within 30 days after receipt of such notice. The Department of Transportation or its agents may enter upon private property for the purpose of removing junk from the junkyards prohibited by this Article without civil or criminal liability. Any person aggrieved by the decision declaring the junkyard illegal shall be granted the right to appeal the decision in accordance with the terms of the rules and regulations enacted by the Department of Transportation pursuant to this Article to the Secretary of Transportation who shall make the final decision on the agency appeal. (1967, c. 1198, s. 6; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; c. 1439, s. 7; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1.)

§ 136-147. Screening of junkyards lawfully in existence.

Any junkyard lawfully in existence on the effective date of this Article as determined by G.S. 136-155 which does not conform to the requirements for exceptions in G.S. 136-144 hereof, and any other junkyard lawfully in existence along any highway which may be hereafter designated as an interstate or primary highway or a North Carolina route in a county without an interstate or federal aid primary highway and which does not conform to the requirements for exception under G.S. 136-144 hereof, shall be screened, if feasible, by the Department of Transportation at locations on the highway right-of-way or in areas acquired for such purposes outside the right-of-way in such manner that said junkyard shall not be visible from the main-traveled way of such highways. The Department of Transportation is authorized to acquire fee simple title or any lesser interest in real property for the purpose required by this section, by gift, purchase or condemnation. (1967, c. 1198, s. 7; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; c. 1439, s. 8; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1; 1993, c. 493, s. 3.)

§ 136-148. Acquisition of existing junkyards where screening impractical.

(a) In the event that the Department of Transportation shall determine that screening of any existing junkyard designated in G.S. 136-147 hereof would be inadequate to accomplish the purposes of this Article, the said Department of Transportation is authorized to secure the relocation, removal or disposal of such junkyard by acquiring the fee simple title, or such lesser interest in land as may be necessary, to the land upon which said junkyard is located, through purchase, gift, exchange or condemnation.

(b) The Department of Transportation is authorized to move and relocate junk located on lands within the provisions of this section, and is authorized to pay the costs of such moving or relocation.

(c) The Department of Transportation is authorized to acquire by purchase, gift, exchange or condemnation, fee simple title or any lesser interest in real property for the purpose of placing and relocating the junk required to be moved under this section or permitted by G.S. 136-146 hereof to be removed. The Department of Transportation is authorized to convey in the manner

provided by law for the conveyance of state-owned property, the lands on which junk is to be relocated, to the owner of the junk with or without consideration, under such conditions and reservations as it deems to be in the public interest.

(d) The Department of Transportation is authorized to convey in the manner provided by law for the conveyance of state-owned property any property acquired under the provisions of this section, under such conditions and reservations as it deems to be in the public interest.

(e) The Department of Transportation upon a determination that the same is necessary for the removal of any junkyard which is prohibited by G.S. 136-144 may acquire by gift, exchange, purchase or condemnation, the junk located on any junkyard which is acquired under this section and may acquire by gift, exchange, purchase or condemnation the fee simple title or lesser interest in land for the purpose of storing said junk by the Department of Transportation and may dispose of said junk in any manner which is not inconsistent with this Article. (1967, c. 1198, s. 8; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1.)

§ 136-149. Permit required for junkyards.

No person shall establish, operate or maintain a junkyard any portion of which is within 1,000 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way of the interstate or primary system or a North Carolina route in a county that does not have an interstate or federal aid primary highway without obtaining a permit from the Department of Transportation or its agents pursuant to the procedures set out by the rules and regulations promulgated by the Department of Transportation. No permit shall be issued under the provisions of this section for the establishment, operation or maintenance of a junkyard within 1,000 feet to the nearest edge of the right-of-way of interstate or primary system except those junkyards which conform to one or more of the exceptions of G.S. 136-144. The permit shall be valid until revoked for the nonconformance of this Article or rules and regulations promulgated by the Department of Transportation thereunder. Any person aggrieved by the decision of the Department of Transportation or its agents in refusing to grant or revoking a permit may appeal the decision in accordance with the rules and regulations enacted by the Department of Transportation pursuant to this Article to the Secretary of Transportation who shall make the final decision upon the agency appeal. The Department of Transportation shall have the authority to charge fees to defray the costs of administering the permit procedures under this Article. The fees for junkyard permits to be issued under this Article shall not exceed a twenty dollar (\$20.00) initial fee and a fifteen dollar (\$15.00) annual renewal fee. (1967, c. 1198, s. 9; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; c. 1439, s. 9; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1; 1983, c. 604, s. 3; 1993, c. 493, s. 4.)

§ 136-149.1. Judicial review.

Any person who is aggrieved by a final decision of the Secretary of Transportation after exhausting all administrative remedies made available to him by rules and regulations enacted pursuant to this Article is entitled to judicial review of such decision under this Article. In order to obtain judicial review of the Secretary of Transportation's decision under this Article, the person seeking review must file a petition in the superior court of the county in which the junkyard is located within 30 days after written copy of the decision of the Secretary of Transportation is served upon the person seeking review. Failure to file such a petition within the time stated shall operate as a waiver of the right of such person to review under this Chapter.

The petition shall state explicitly what exceptions are taken to the decisions of the Secretary of Transportation and what relief petitioner seeks. Within 10 days after the petition is filed with the court, the person seeking the review shall serve copies of the petition by registered mail, return

receipt requested, upon the Department of Transportation. Within 30 days after receipt of the copy of the petition for review, or within such additional time as the court may allow, the Department of Transportation shall transmit to the reviewing court a certified copy of the written decision.

At any time before or during the review proceeding, the aggrieved party may apply to the reviewing court for an order staying the operation of the decision of the Secretary of Transportation pending the outcome of the review. The court may grant or deny the stay in its discretion upon such terms as it deems proper. The review of the decision of the Secretary of Transportation under this Article shall be conducted by the court without a jury and shall hear the matter de novo pursuant to the rules of evidence as applied in the general court of justice. The court, after hearing the matter may affirm, reverse or modify the decision if the decision is:

- (1) In violation of constitutional provisions; or
- (2) Not made in accordance with this Article or rules or regulations promulgated by the Department of Transportation;
- (3) Affected by other error or law.

The party aggrieved shall have the burden of showing that the decision was violative of one of the above.

A party to the review proceedings, including the agency, may appeal to the appellate division from the final judgment of the superior court under the rules of procedure applicable in other civil cases. The appealing party may apply to the superior court for a stay for its final determination or a stay of the administrative decision, whichever shall be appropriate, pending the outcome of the appeal to the appellate division. (1973, c. 1439, s. 10; 1977, c. 464, ss. 7.1, 32, 33.)

§ 136-150. Condemnation procedure.

The Department of Transportation shall use the condemnation procedure as provided by Article 9 of Chapter 136 of the General Statutes for the purposes of this Article. (1967, c. 1198, s. 10; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1.)

§ 136-151. Rules and regulations by Department of Transportation; delegation of authority to Secretary of Transportation.

The Department of Transportation is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations in the form of ordinances governing:

- (1) The establishment, operation and maintenance of junkyards permitted in G.S. 136-144 which shall include, but not be limited to, rules and regulations for determining unzoned industrial areas for the purpose of this Article.
- (2) The specific requirements and procedures for obtaining a permit for junkyards as required in G.S. 136-149 and for the administrative procedures for appealing a decision at the agency level to refuse to grant or in revoking a permit previously issued.
- (3) The administrative procedures for appealing a decision at the agency level to declare any junkyard illegal and a nuisance as pursuant to G.S. 136-146.
- (4) The specific requirements governing the location, planting, construction and maintenance of material used in the screening or fencing required by this Article, all as may be necessary to carry out the policy of the State as declared in this Article.

The Department of Transportation, in its discretion, may delegate to the Secretary of Transportation the authority to promulgate such rules and regulations on its behalf. (1967, c. 1198, s. 11; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; c. 1439, s. 11; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1.)

§ 136-152. Agreements with United States.

The Department of Transportation is authorized to enter into agreements with other governmental authorities relating to the control of junkyards and areas in the vicinity of interstate and primary systems, and to take action in the name of the State to comply with the terms of such agreement. (1967, c. 1198, s. 12; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1.)

§ 136-153. Zoning changes.

All zoning authorities shall give written notice to the Department of Transportation of the establishment or revision of any industrial zone within 660 feet of the right-of-way of interstate or primary highways. Notice shall be by registered mail sent to the offices of the Department of Transportation in Raleigh, North Carolina, within 15 days after the effective date of the zoning change or establishment. (1967, c. 1198, s. 13; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1.)

§ 136-154. Alternate control.

In addition to any other provisions of this Article, the Department of Transportation shall have the authority to acquire by purchase, gift, exchange, or condemnation, such interests in real property as may be necessary to control the establishment and maintenance of junkyards in accordance with the policy, standards and regulations set out herein. (1967, c. 1198, s. 14; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1.)

§ 136-155. Availability of federal aid funds.

The Department of Transportation shall not be required to expend any funds for the regulation of junkyards under this Article, nor shall the provisions of this Article, with the exception of G.S. 136-152 hereof, have any force and effect until federal funds are made available to the State for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Article, and the Department of Transportation has entered into an agreement with the United States Secretary of Transportation as authorized by G.S. 136-152 hereof and as provided by the Highway Beautification Act of 1965 or subsequent amendment thereto. (1967, c. 1198, s. 15; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; c. 1439, s. 12; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1.)