

Article 6H.

Public Toll Roads and Bridges.

Part 1. Turnpike Authority and Toll Projects.

§ 136-89.180. Legislative findings.

The General Assembly finds that the existing State road system is becoming increasingly congested and overburdened with traffic in many areas of the State; that the sharp surge of vehicle miles traveled is overwhelming the State's ability to build and pay for adequate road improvements; and that an adequate answer to this challenge will require the State to be innovative and utilize several new approaches to transportation improvements in North Carolina.

Toll funding of highway and bridge construction is feasible in North Carolina and can contribute to addressing the critical transportation needs of the State. A toll program can speed the implementation of needed transportation improvements by funding some projects with tolls. (2002-133, s. 1.)

§ 136-89.181. Definitions.

The following definitions apply to this Article:

- (1) Department. – The North Carolina Department of Transportation.
- (2) Turnpike Authority. – The public agency created by this Article.
- (3) Authority Board. – The governing board of the Turnpike Authority.
- (4) Turnpike project. – Either of the following:
 - a. A road, bridge, or tunnel project planned, or planned and constructed, in accordance with the provisions of this Article.
 - b. A segment of the State highway system the Authority Board converts to a tolled highway pursuant to the authorization in G.S. 136-89.187.
- (5) Turnpike system. – All Turnpike projects. (2002-133, s. 1; 2008-225, s. 3.)

§ 136-89.182. North Carolina Turnpike Authority.

(a) Creation. – There is created a body politic and corporate to be known as the "North Carolina Turnpike Authority". The Authority is constituted as a public agency, and the exercise by the Authority of the powers conferred by this Article in the construction, operation, and maintenance of toll roads and bridges shall be deemed and held to be the performance of an essential governmental function.

(b) Administrative Placement. – The Authority shall be located within the Department of Transportation and shall be subject to and under the direct supervision of the Secretary of Transportation.

(c) Authority Board. – The North Carolina Turnpike Authority shall be governed by a nine-member Authority Board consisting of two members appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate in accordance with G.S. 120-121, two members appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives in accordance with G.S. 120-121, four members appointed by the Governor, and the Secretary of Transportation. Each appointing authority shall appoint members who reside in diverse regions of the State. The Chair of the Authority shall be selected by the Authority Board.

(d) Board of Transportation Members. – Members of the North Carolina Board of Transportation may serve as members of the Authority Board.

(e) Staggered Terms. – One of the initial appointments to the Authority Board by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, one of the initial appointments to the Authority Board by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and three of the initial appointments of the Governor shall be appointed to terms ending January 14, 2007. One of the initial appointments to the Authority Board by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, one of the initial appointments to the Authority Board by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and one of the initial appointments of the Governor shall be appointed to terms ending January 14, 2005. The Secretary of Transportation shall serve as an ex officio voting member of the Board. Thereafter, at the expiration of each stipulated term of office, all appointments shall be to a term of four years from the date of the expiration of the term.

(f) Vacancies. – All members of the Authority Board shall remain in office until their successors are appointed and qualified. The original appointing authority may appoint a member to serve out the unexpired term of any member.

(g) Removal of Board Members. – Each member of the Authority Board, notwithstanding subsection (e) of this section, shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority. The Chair of the Authority serves at the pleasure of the Authority Board.

(h) Conflicts of Interest, Ethics. – Members of the Authority Board shall be subject to the provisions of G.S. 136-13, 136-13.1, and 136-14.

(i) Compensation. – The appointed members of the Authority Board shall receive no salary for their services but shall be entitled to receive per diem and travel allowances in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 138-5 and G.S. 138-6 as appropriate.

(j) Bylaws. – The Authority Board shall adopt, change, or amend bylaws with respect to the calling of meetings, quorums, voting procedures, the keeping of records, and other organizational, staffing, and administrative matters as the Authority Board may determine. Any bylaws, or subsequent changes or amendments to the bylaws, shall be included in the Annual Report as required by G.S. 136-89.193.

(k) Executive Director and Administrative Employees. – The Authority Board shall appoint an Executive Director, whose salary shall be fixed by the Authority, to serve at its pleasure. The Executive Director shall be the Authority's chief administrative officer and shall be responsible for the daily administration of the toll roads and bridges constructed, maintained, or operated pursuant to this Article. The Executive Director or his designee shall appoint, employ, dismiss, and, within the limits approved by the Authority Board, fix the compensation of administrative employees as the Executive Director deems necessary to carry out this Article.

(l) Office. – The offices of the Authority may be housed in one or more facilities of the Department of Transportation. (2002-133, s. 1; 2009-343, ss. 1, 2; 2011-145, s. 28.35(c).)

§ 136-89.183. Powers of the Authority.

(a) The Authority shall have all of the powers necessary to execute the provisions of this Article, including the following:

- (1) The powers of a corporate body, including the power to sue and be sued, to make contracts, to adopt and use a common seal, and to alter the adopted seal as needed.
- (2) To study, plan, develop, and undertake preliminary design work on Turnpike Projects. At the conclusion of these activities, the Turnpike Authority is

authorized to design, establish, purchase, construct, operate, and maintain no more than eleven projects, which shall include the following:

- a. Triangle Expressway, including segments also known as N.C. 540, Triangle Parkway, Phases 1 and 2 of Complete 540, and the Western Wake Freeway in Wake and Durham Counties. The described segments constitute one project.
- b. Repealed by Session Laws 2013-183, s. 5.1, effective July 1, 2013.
- c. Monroe Connector/Bypass.
- d., e. Repealed by Session Laws 2013-183, s. 5.1, effective July 1, 2013.
- f. Repealed by Session Laws 2008-225, s. 4, effective August 17, 2008.

Any other project proposed by the Authority in addition to the projects listed in this subdivision requires prior consultation with the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations pursuant to G.S. 120-76.1 no less than 180 days prior to initiating the process required by Article 7 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes.

With the exception of the two projects set forth in sub subdivisions a. and c. of this subdivision, the Turnpike projects selected for construction by the Turnpike Authority, prior to the letting of a contract for the project, shall meet the following conditions: (i) two of the projects must be ranked in the top 35 based on total score on the Department produced list entitled "Mobility Fund Project Scores" dated June 6, 2012, and, in addition, may be subject to G.S. 136-18(39a); (ii) of the projects not ranked as provided in (i), one may be subject to G.S. 136-18(39a); (iii) the projects shall be included in any applicable locally adopted comprehensive transportation plans; (iv) the projects shall be shown in the current State Transportation Improvement Program; and (v) toll projects must be approved by all affected Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Rural Transportation Planning Organizations for tolling.

- (3) Repealed by Session Laws 2005-275, s. 2, effective August 12, 2005.
- (4) To rent, lease, purchase, acquire, own, encumber, dispose of, or mortgage real or personal property, including the power to acquire property by eminent domain pursuant to G.S. 136-89.184.
- (5) To fix, revise, charge, retain, enforce, and collect tolls and fees for the use of the Turnpike Projects. Thirty days prior to the effective date of any toll or fee for use of a Turnpike Facility, the Authority shall submit a description of the proposed toll or fee to the Board of Transportation, the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee and the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations for review.
- (6) To issue bonds or notes of the Authority as provided in this Article.
- (6a) To invest the proceeds of bonds or notes of the Authority that are pending disbursement or other idle funds of the Authority in any investment authorized by G.S. 159-30.
- (7) To establish, construct, purchase, maintain, equip, and operate any structure or facilities associated with the Turnpike System.
- (8) To pay all necessary costs and expenses in the formation, organization, administration, and operation of the Authority.

- (9) To apply for, accept, and administer loans and grants of money or real or personal property from any federal agency, the State or its political subdivisions, local governments, or any other public or private sources available.
- (10) To adopt, alter, or repeal its own bylaws or rules implementing the provisions of this Article, in accordance with the review and comment requirements of G.S. 136-89.182(j).
- (11) To utilize employees of the Department; to contract for the services of consulting engineers, architects, attorneys, real estate counselors, appraisers, and other consultants; to employ administrative staff as may be required in the judgment of the Authority; and to fix and pay fees or compensation to the Department, contractors, and administrative employees from funds available to the Authority.
- (12) To receive and use appropriations from the State and federal government.
- (13) To adopt procedures to govern its procurement of services and delivery of Turnpike Projects.
- (14) To perform or procure any portion of services required by the Authority.
- (15) To use officers, employees, agents, and facilities of the Department for the purposes and upon the terms as may be mutually agreeable.
- (16) To contract for the construction, maintenance, and operation of a Turnpike Project.
- (17) To enter into partnership agreements with the Department of Transportation, agreements with political subdivisions of the State, and agreements with private entities, and to expend such funds as it deems necessary, pursuant to such agreements, for the purpose of financing the cost of acquiring, constructing, equipping, operating, or maintaining any Turnpike Project. An agreement entered under this subdivision requires the concurrence of the Board of Transportation if the Department of Transportation is a party to the agreement.
- (18) To utilize incentives in any contract for development or construction of a Turnpike Project, in order to promote expedited delivery of the project.
- (19) To enter into reciprocal toll enforcement agreements with other toll agencies, as provided in G.S. 136-89.220.

(b) To execute the powers provided in subsection (a) of this section, the Authority shall determine its policies by majority vote of the members of the Authority Board present and voting, a quorum having been established. Once a policy is established, the Authority Board shall communicate it to the Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee, who shall have the sole and exclusive authority to execute the policy of the Authority. No member of the Authority Board shall have the responsibility or authority to give operational directives to any employee of the Authority other than the Executive Director or the Director's designee. (2002-133, s. 1; 2005-275, s. 2; 2006-228, s. 5; 2006-230, s. 1(b); 2008-225, s. 4; 2011-7, s. 1; 2011-145, s. 28.32(e); 2011-391, s. 56; 2012-85, s. 9; 2013-94, s. 1; 2013-183, ss. 5.1, 5.3; 2015-241, ss. 29.12(a), 29.15A; 2024-30, s. 32(a).)

§ 136-89.183A. Accelerated Pilot Toll Bridge Project.

(a) Findings. – The General Assembly finds that there is a need for a bridge connecting the Currituck County mainland to the Currituck County Outer Banks; that the bridge should be

implemented as a toll bridge; that the bridge should be implemented in a manner that protects the natural environment and quality of life on the Outer Banks; and that the character of the existing road system in Currituck County and Dare County Outer Banks should be preserved.

(b) Contract to Construct Accelerated Pilot Toll Bridge Project. – The Authority shall contract with one or more private firms to design, obtain all necessary permits for, and construct the toll bridge known as the Mid-Currituck Bridge, in order to provide accelerated, efficient, and cost-effective completion of the project.

(c) Preconstruction Participation. – In addition to the authority granted by G.S. 136-89.191, the Department shall participate in the cost of preconstruction activities related to the project described in this section, if requested by the Authority.

(d) Environmental Protection. – The Authority shall ensure that the Mid-Currituck Bridge is implemented in a manner that accomplishes all of the following:

- (1) Ensures the preservation of water quality in Currituck Sound.
- (2) Mitigates the environmental impact of the bridge on the Currituck County mainland and the Outer Banks.
- (3) Reduces traffic congestion and vehicle miles traveled, and preserves the character of the existing road system, in Dare County and Currituck County on the Outer Banks.

(e) Report on Project. – The Authority shall report to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee on December 1, 2005, and each December 1 thereafter until completion, on the progress of the accelerated pilot toll bridge project described in this section. (2005-275, s. 3; 2008-225, s. 11; 2024-30, s. 32(b).)

§ 136-89.183B. Accelerated Herbert C. Bonner Bridge Replacement Project.

(a) Contract for Accelerated Construction of the Herbert C. Bonner Replacement Bridge Project. – The Department of Transportation shall implement all reasonable measures to expedite completion of environmental reviews required by the National Environmental Policy Act. Within 90 days of receiving an approved Record of Decision from the Federal Highway Administration, the Department shall contract with a single private firm to design and build a replacement bridge for the Herbert C. Bonner Bridge at Oregon Inlet, in accordance with G.S. 136-28.11, in order to expedite and accelerate the efficient, cost effective completion of the project.

(b) Replacement Bridge; Termini. – The General Assembly recommends that the replacement bridge constructed pursuant to this section shall be located with north and south termini located in general proximity to the termini of the existing Herbert C. Bonner Bridge. It is recognized, however, that the preferred alternative for the bridge location cannot be determined prior to compliance with all federal and State laws and regulations.

(c) Department to Report on Project. – The Department shall report to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee on December 1, 2005, and each December 1 thereafter until completion, on the progress of the accelerated bridge project described in this section. (2005-275, s. 6(b); 2005-382, s. 3.)

§ 136-89.183C. Accelerated Yadkin River Veterans Memorial Bridge Replacement Project.

(a) Contract for Accelerated Construction of the Yadkin River Veterans Memorial Bridge Replacement Bridge Project. – The Authority shall study, plan, develop, undertake preliminary design work, and analyze and list all necessary permits, in preparation for construction of a replacement bridge and approaches for the Yadkin River Veterans Memorial Bridge over the

Yadkin River and between Rowan and Davidson Counties, in order to provide accelerated, efficient, and cost-effective completion of the project.

(b) Replacement Bridge; Termini. – The bridge constructed pursuant to this section shall be a replacement bridge, with north and south termini located in general proximity to the termini of the existing Yadkin River Veterans Memorial Bridge. (2007-299, s. 1; 2012-42, s. 3.)

§ 136-89.184. Acquisition of real property.

(a) General. – The Authority may acquire public or private real property by purchase, negotiation, gift, or devise, or condemnation that it determines to be necessary and convenient for the construction, expansion, enlargement, extension, improvement, or operation of a Turnpike Project. When the Authority acquires real property owned by the State, the Secretary of the Department of Administration shall execute and deliver to the Authority a deed transferring fee simple title to the property to the Authority.

(b) Condemnation. – To exercise the power of eminent domain, the Authority shall commence a proceeding in its name and shall follow the procedure set forth in Article 9 of Chapter 136 of the General Statutes. (2002-133, s. 1.)

§ 136-89.185. Taxation of property of Authority.

Property owned by the Authority is exempt from taxation in accordance with Section 2 of Article V of the North Carolina Constitution. (2002-133, s. 1.)

§ 136-89.186. Audit.

The operations of the Authority shall be subject to the oversight of the State Auditor pursuant to Article 5A of Chapter 147 of the General Statutes. (2002-133, s. 1.)

§ 136-89.187. Conversion of free highways prohibited.

The Authority Board is prohibited from converting any segment of the nontolled State Highway System to a toll facility, except for a segment of N.C. 540 under construction as of July 1, 2006, located in Wake County and extending from the N.C. 54 exit on N.C. 540 to the N.C. 55 exit on N.C. 540. No segment may be converted to a toll route pursuant to this section unless first approved by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or Rural Planning Organization (RPO) of the area in which that segment is located. (2002-133, s. 1; 2006-228, s. 3; 2008-225, s. 5.)

§ 136-89.188. Use of revenues.

(a) Revenues derived from a Turnpike Project authorized under this Article shall be used only for the following costs associated with the Project from which the revenue was derived or a contiguous toll facility:

- (1) Authority administration costs.
- (2) Development, right-of-way acquisition, design, construction, expansion, operation, maintenance, reconstruction, rehabilitation, and replacement costs.
- (3) Debt service on the Authority's revenue bonds or related purposes such as the establishment of debt service reserve funds.
- (4) Debt service, debt service reserve funds, and other financing costs related to any of the following:
 - a. A financing undertaken by a private entity under a partnership agreement with the entity for the Project.

- b. Private activity bonds issued under law related to the Project.
 - c. Any federal or State loan, line of credit, or loan guarantee relating to the Project.
- (5) A return on investment of any private entity under a partnership agreement with the entity for the Project.
 - (6) Any other uses granted to a private entity under a partnership agreement with the entity for the Project.
- (b) The Authority may use up to one hundred percent (100%) of the revenue derived from a Turnpike Project for debt service on the Authority's revenue bonds or for a combination of debt service and operation and maintenance expenses of the Project.
 - (c) The Authority shall use not more than five percent (5%) of total revenue derived from all Turnpike Projects for Authority administration costs.
 - (d) Repealed by Session Laws 2018-5, s. 34.5(a), effective June 12, 2018. (2002-133, s. 1; 2006-228, s. 4; 2013-183, s. 5.4; 2018-5, s. 34.5(a).)

§ 136-89.189. Turnpike Authority revenue bonds.

The Authority shall be a municipality for purposes of Article 5 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes, the State and Local Government Revenue Bond Act, and may issue revenue bonds pursuant to that Act to pay all or a portion of the cost of a Turnpike Project or to refund any previously issued bonds. In connection with the issuance of revenue bonds, the Authority shall have all powers of a municipality under the State and Local Government Revenue Bond Act, and revenue bonds issued by the Authority shall be entitled to the protection of all provisions of the State and Local Government Revenue Bond Act.

Except as provided in this section, the provisions of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes, the Local Government Finance Act, apply to revenue bonds issued by the Turnpike Authority.

- (1) The term of a lease between the Turnpike Authority and the Department executed prior to July 27, 2009, for all or any part of a Turnpike Project may exceed 40 years, as agreed by the Authority and the Department.
- (2) The maturity date of a refunding bond may extend to the earlier of the following:
 - a. Forty years from the date of issuance of the refunding bond.
 - b. The date the Turnpike Authority determines is the maturity date required for the Turnpike Project funded with the refunding bonds to generate sufficient revenues to retire the refunding bonds and any other outstanding indebtedness issued for that Project. The Authority's determination of the appropriate maturity date is conclusive and binding. In making its determination, the Authority may take into account appropriate financing terms and conventions. (2002-133, s. 1; 2009-56, s. 2; 2010-165, s. 10.)

§ 136-89.190. Sale of Turnpike Authority revenue bonds.

Revenue bonds of the Authority issued pursuant to G.S. 136-89.189 and the State and Local Government Revenue Bond Act shall be sold in accordance with and pursuant to Article 7 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes. (2002-133, s. 1.)

§ 136-89.191. Cost participation by Department of Transportation.

The Department of Transportation may participate in the cost of preconstruction activities, construction, maintenance, or operation of a Turnpike Project. (2002-133, s. 1.)

§ 136-89.192. Applicability of formula.

Only those funds applied to a Turnpike Project from the State Highway Fund, State Highway Trust Fund, or federal-aid funds that might otherwise be used for other roadway projects within the State, and are otherwise already subject to the formula under G.S. 136-189.11 shall be included in the formula.

Other revenue from the sale of the Authority's bonds or notes, project loans, or toll collections shall not be included in the formula. (2002-133, s. 1; 2013-183, s. 4.6.)

§ 136-89.193. Annual plan of work; annual and quarterly reports.

(a) Annual Plan of Work. – The Authority shall annually develop a plan of work for the fiscal year, describing the activities and projects to be undertaken, accompanied by a budget. This annual plan of work shall be subject to the concurrence of the Board of Transportation.

(b) Annual Reports. – The Authority shall, promptly following the close of each fiscal year, submit an annual report of its activities for the preceding fiscal year and an annual audit of its books and accounts for the preceding fiscal year to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Department of Transportation. The report and audit shall be submitted no later than October 31 of the fiscal year in which the report and audit are completed.

The North Carolina Turnpike Authority shall report to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee on January 31, 2017, and in its annual report thereafter, the number of one-time toll facility users who are charged more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) in processing fees imposed under G.S. 136-89.215 and civil penalties assessed under G.S. 136-89.216.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 2016-90, s. 4, effective July 11, 2016.

(d) Report Prior to Let of Contracts. – The Authority shall consult with and report to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee and the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations prior to the letting of any contract for Turnpike Project construction authorized under G.S. 136-183(a)(2).

(e) Repealed by Session Laws 2011-145, s. 28.35(a), effective July 1, 2011. (2002-133, s. 1; 2011-145, s. 28.35(a); 2014-58, s. 3; 2016-90, ss. 3.1, 4.)

§ 136-89.194. Laws applicable to the Authority; exceptions.

(a) Motor Vehicle Laws. – The Turnpike System shall be considered a "highway" as defined in G.S. 20-4.01(13) and a "public vehicular area" as defined in G.S. 20-4.01(32). All law enforcement and emergency personnel, including the State Highway Patrol and the Division of Motor Vehicles, shall have the same powers and duties on the Turnpike System as on any other highway or public vehicular area.

(b) Applicable Contracting. – For the purposes of implementing this Article, the Authority shall solicit competitive proposals for the construction of Turnpike Projects in accordance with the provisions of Article 2 of this Chapter. Contracts for professional engineering services and other kinds of professional or specialized services necessary in connection with construction of Turnpike Projects shall be solicited in accordance with procedures utilized by the Department of Transportation. Cost estimates prepared for the purpose of comparing bids for a Turnpike project are confidential and may not be disclosed until after the opening of bids for the project.

(c) Alternative Contracting Methods. – Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, the Authority may authorize the use of alternative contracting methods if:

- (1) The authorization applies to an individual project;
- (2) The Authority has concluded, and documented in writing, that the alternative contracting method is necessary because the project cannot be completed utilizing the procedures of Article 2 of this Chapter within the necessary time frame or available funding or for other reasons the Authority deems in the public interest;
- (3) The Authority has provided, to the extent possible, for the solicitation of competitive proposals prior to awarding a contract; and
- (4) The approved alternative contracting method provides for reasonable compliance with the disadvantaged business participation goals of G.S. 136-28.4.

(d) Entry for Surveys. – The Turnpike Authority and its employees and contractors shall have the same right of entry for surveys, borings, soundings, or examinations as granted the Department of Transportation in G.S. 136-120.

(e) Plans and Contract Documents. – The requirements for registering right-of-way plans set in G.S. 136-19.4 apply to right-of-way plans of the Turnpike Authority. In applying G.S. 136-19.4 to the Authority, references to the "Department" are considered references to the "Turnpike Authority" and references to the "Board" are considered references to the "Authority Board."

Diaries and analyses for contracts of the Turnpike Authority are subject to the same restrictions on disclosure that apply to diaries and analyses for contracts of the Department under G.S. 136-28.5.

(f) Construction Claims. – G.S. 136-29 applies to the adjustment and resolution of Turnpike project construction claims. In applying G.S. 136-29 to the Turnpike Authority, references to the "Department of Transportation," the "Chief Engineer," and a "State highway" are considered references to the "Turnpike Authority," the "chief engineer of the Turnpike Authority," and a "Turnpike project."

(g) Contract Exemptions. – The following provisions concerning the purchase of goods and services by a State agency do not apply to the Turnpike Authority:

- (1) Article 3 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes. The Authority may use the services of the Department of Administration in procuring goods and services that are not specific to establishing and operating a toll revenue system. However, the Authority shall: (i) submit all proposed contracts for supplies, materials, printing, equipment, and contractual services that exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000) authorized by this subdivision to the Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee for review as provided in G.S. 114-8.3; and, (ii) include in all proposed contracts to be awarded by the Authority under this subdivision a standard clause which provides that the State Auditor and internal auditors of the Authority may audit the records of the contractor during and after the term of the contract to verify accounts and data affecting fees and performance. The Authority shall not award a cost plus percentage of cost agreement or contract for any purpose.
- (2) Article 15 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes. The Authority may use the services of the Department of Information Technology in procuring goods and

services that are not specific to establishing and operating a toll revenue system. However, all contract information for contracts for information technology are subject to disclosure in accordance with Article 15 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes.

(h) APA. – Chapter 150B of the General Statutes does not apply to the Turnpike Authority, except as provided in this section and G.S. 136-89.218. (2002-133, s. 1; 2006-228, s. 6; 2008-225, s. 6; 2010-194, s. 20.1; 2011-326, s. 15(u); 2012-85, s. 8; 2015-241, s. 7A.4(m).)

§ 136-89.195. Internet report of funds expended.

The Department shall publish and update annually on its Internet web site a record of all expenditures of the Authority for highway construction, maintenance, and administration. The record shall include a total expenditure amount by county. For each Turnpike Project, the record shall include a readily identifiable project name or location, the nature of the project, the amount of the project, the contractor for the project, the date of project letting, and the actual or expected project completion date. (2002-133, s. 1.)

§ 136-89.196. Removal of tolls.

The Authority shall, upon fulfillment of and subject to any restrictions included in the agreements entered into by the Authority in connection with the issuance of the Authority's revenue bonds, remove tolls from a Turnpike Project. (2002-133, s. 1.)

§ 136-89.197. Maintenance of nontoll routes.

The Department shall maintain an existing, alternate, comparable nontoll route corresponding to each Turnpike Project constructed pursuant to this Article. (2002-133, s. 1.)

§ 136-89.198. Authority to toll existing interstate highways.

(a) General. – Notwithstanding any other provision of this Article, the Authority may collect tolls on any existing interstate highway for which the United States Department of Transportation has granted permission by permit, or any other lawful means, to do so. The revenue generated from the collected tolls shall be used by the Authority to repair and maintain the interstate on which the tolls were collected. These revenues shall not be used to repair, maintain, or upgrade any State primary or secondary road adjacent to or connected with the interstate highways.

(b) Method. – The Authority shall establish toll locations on the permitted interstate highway in accordance with federal guidelines. Toll locations shall be erected at or near the borders of the State and at such other locations that are not impracticable, unfeasible, or that would result in an unsafe or hazardous condition.

(c) Severability. – If any provision of this section or its application is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this section that can be given effect without the invalid provisions or application, and to this end the provisions of this section are severable. (2005-276, s. 28.21(b).)

§ 136-89.199. Designation of high-occupancy toll and managed lanes.

(a) Authority. – Notwithstanding any other provision of this Article, the Authority may designate one or more lanes of any highway, or portion thereof, within the State, including lanes that may previously have been designated as HOV lanes under G.S. 20-146.2, as high-occupancy toll (HOT) or other type of managed lanes; provided, however, that such designation shall not

reduce the number of existing non-toll general purpose lanes. In making such designations, the Authority shall specify the high-occupancy requirement or other conditions for use of such lanes, which may include restricting vehicle types, access controls, or the payment of tolls for vehicles that do not meet the high-occupancy requirements or conditions for use.

(b) Reporting. – At least 90 days prior to the letting of a contract for the designation of a HOT lane or other type of managed lane under subsection (a) of this section, the Authority shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee detailing (i) the reasoning for the designation of the HOT lane or other type of managed lane and (ii) the terms of the contract that will be let. The reporting requirement in this subsection does not apply to any project proposed by the Authority that is subject to the reporting requirement set forth in G.S. 136-89.183(a)(2).

(c) Penalty. – Violation of a use requirement or use condition for lanes designated under subsection (a) of this section is an infraction. (2013-183, s. 5.5; 2013-360, s. 34.30; 2013-410, s. 38(e); 2018-5, s. 34.5(b); 2021-185, s. 13(a).)

§ 136-89.200: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 136-89.201: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 136-89.202: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 136-89.203: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 136-89.204: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 136-89.205: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 136-89.206: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 136-89.207: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 136-89.208: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 136-89.209: Reserved for future codification purposes.

Part 2. Collection of Tolls on Turnpike Projects.

§ 136-89.210. Definitions.

The definitions in G.S. 136-89.181 and the following definitions apply in this Article:

- (1) Reserved.
- (2) Open road toll. – A toll payable under an open road tolling system.
- (3) Open road tolling system. – A system of collecting a toll for the use of a highway that does not provide a way to pay the toll in cash while traveling on the highway. (2008-225, s. 2; 2013-410, s. 12.)

§ 136-89.211. Tolls for use of Turnpike project.

In exercising its authority under G.S. 136-89.183 to set tolls for the use of a Turnpike project, the Authority may not do any of the following:

- (1) Set open road tolls that vary for the same class of motor vehicle depending on the method by which the Authority identifies a motor vehicle that drives on the Turnpike project. This does not preclude the Authority from allowing a discount for a motor vehicle equipped with an electronic toll collection transponder or a motor vehicle that has prepaid its toll.
- (2) Exempt a motor vehicle that is not a law enforcement vehicle, an emergency fire or rescue vehicle, or an emergency medical services vehicle from the requirement of paying a toll for the use of a Turnpike project. (2008-225, s. 2; 2010-133, s. 2.)

§ 136-89.212. Payment of toll required for use of Turnpike project.

(a) A motor vehicle that is driven on a Turnpike project is subject to a toll imposed by the Authority for the use of the project. If the toll is an open road toll, the person who is the registered owner of the motor vehicle is liable for payment of the toll unless the registered owner establishes that the motor vehicle was in the care, custody, and control of another person when it was driven on the Turnpike project.

(b) A person establishes that a motor vehicle was in the care, custody, and control of another person when it was driven on a Turnpike project by submitting to the Authority a sworn affidavit stating one of the following:

- (1) The name and address of the person who had the care, custody, and control of the motor vehicle when it was driven. If the motor vehicle was leased or rented under a long-term lease or rental, as defined in G.S. 105-187.1, the affidavit must be supported by a copy of the lease or rental agreement or other written evidence of the agreement.
- (2) The motor vehicle was stolen. The affidavit must be supported by an insurance or police report concerning the theft or other written evidence of the theft.
- (3) The person transferred the motor vehicle to another person by sale or otherwise before it was driven on the Turnpike project. The affidavit must be supported by insurance information, a copy of the certificate of title, or other evidence of the transfer.

(c) If a person establishes that a motor vehicle was in the care, custody, and control of another person under subsection (b) of this section, the other person shall be liable for the payment of the toll, and the Authority may send a bill to collect and enforce the toll in accordance with this Article; provided, however, that such other person may contest such toll in accordance with this Article. (2008-225, s. 2; 2013-183, s. 5.6.)

§ 136-89.213. Administration of tolls and requirements for open road tolls.

(a) Administration. – The Authority is responsible for collecting tolls on Turnpike projects. In exercising its authority under G.S. 136-89.183 to perform or procure services required by the Authority, the Authority may contract with one or more providers to perform part or all of the collection functions and may enter into agreements to exchange information, including confidential information under subsection (a1) of this section, that identifies motor vehicles and their owners with one or more of the following entities: the Division of Motor Vehicles of the Department of Transportation, another state, another toll operator, a toll collection-related

organization, or a private entity that has entered into a partnership agreement with the Authority pursuant to G.S. 136-89.183(a)(17). Further, the Authority may assign its authority to fix, revise, charge, retain, enforce, and collect tolls and fees under this Article to a private entity that has entered into a partnership agreement with the Authority pursuant to G.S. 136-89.183(a)(17).

(a1) Identifying information obtained by the Authority through an agreement is not a public record and is subject to the disclosure limitations in 18 U.S.C. § 2721, the federal Driver's Privacy Protection Act. The Authority shall maintain the confidentiality of all information required to be kept confidential under 18 U.S.C. § 2721(a), as well as any financial information, transaction history, and information related to the collection of a toll or user fee from a person, including, but not limited to, photographs or other recorded images or automatic vehicle identification or driver account information generated by radio-frequency identification or other electronic means. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section:

- (1) The account holder may examine his own account information, and the Authority may use the account information only for purposes of collecting and enforcing tolls.
- (2) A party, by authority of a proper court order, may inspect and examine confidential account information.

(b) Open Road Tolls. – If a Turnpike project uses an open road tolling system, the Authority must operate a facility that is in the immediate vicinity of the Turnpike project or provide an alternate means to accept cash payment of the toll and must place signs on the Turnpike project that give drivers the following information:

- (1) Notice that the driver is approaching a highway for which a toll is required. Signs providing this information must be placed before the toll is incurred.
- (2) The methods by which the toll may be paid.
- (3) If applicable, directions to the nearby facility that accepts cash payment of the toll. (2008-225, s. 2; 2012-78, s. 12; 2013-183, s. 5.6.)

§ 136-89.214. Bill for unpaid open road toll.

(a) Bill. – If a motor vehicle travels on a Turnpike project that uses an open road tolling system and a toll for traveling on the project is not paid prior to travel or at the time of travel, the Authority must send a bill by first-class mail to the registered owner of the motor vehicle or the person who had care, custody, and control of the vehicle as established under G.S. 136-89.212(b) for the amount of the unpaid toll; provided, however, that with the written consent of the registered owner of the motor vehicle or the person who had care, custody, and control of the vehicle as set forth above, the Authority may send the bill via electronic mail to a designated electronic mail account rather than by first-class mail. The Authority must send the bill within 90 days after the travel occurs, or within 90 days of receipt of a sworn affidavit submitted under G.S. 136-89.212(b) identifying the person who had care, custody, and control of the motor vehicle. If a bill is not sent within the required time, the Authority waives collection of the toll. The Authority must establish a billing period for unpaid open road tolls that is no shorter than 15 days. A bill for a billing period must include all unpaid tolls incurred by the same person during the billing period.

(b) Information on Bill. – A bill sent under this section must include all of the following information:

- (1) The name and address of the registered owner of the motor vehicle that traveled on the Turnpike project or of the person identified under G.S. 136-89.212(b).

- (1a) The vehicle identification number (VIN) or other vehicle identifying information of the motor vehicle that traveled on the Turnpike project.
- (2) The date the travel occurred, the approximate time the travel occurred, and each segment of the Turnpike project on which the travel occurred.
- (3) An image of the registration plate of the motor vehicle, if the Authority captured an electronic image of the motor vehicle when it traveled on the Turnpike project.
- (4) The amount of the toll due and an explanation of how payment may be made.
- (5) The date by which the toll must be paid to avoid the imposition of a processing fee under G.S. 136-89.215 and the amount of the processing fee.
- (6) A statement that a vehicle owner who has unpaid tolls is subject to a civil penalty and may not renew the vehicle's registration until the tolls and civil penalties are paid.
- (7) A clear and concise explanation of how to contest liability for the toll.
- (8) If applicable, a copy of the affidavit submitted under G.S. 136-89.212(b) identifying the person with care, custody, and control of the motor vehicle.

(c) **Electronic Information Verification.** – The Authority may utilize digital communications and methods to obtain information for a registered owner of a motor vehicle through verification of phone numbers, connected or enabled vehicle applications, and other digital means to pursue a bill by first-class mail. (2008-225, s. 2; 2010-133, s. 3; 2013-183, s. 5.6; 2013-360, s. 34.30; 2016-90, s. 3; 2024-15, s. 12(a).)

§ 136-89.215. Required action upon receiving bill for open road toll and processing fee for unpaid toll.

(a) **Action Required.** – A person who receives a bill from the Authority for an unpaid open road toll must take one of the following actions within 30 days of the date of the bill:

- (1) Pay the bill.
- (2) Send a written request to the Authority for a review of the toll.

(b) **Fee.** – If a person does not take one of the actions required under subsection (a) of this section within the required time, the Authority may add a processing fee to the amount the person owes. The processing fee may not exceed nine dollars (\$9.00). A person may not be charged more than seventy-two dollars (\$72.00) in processing fees in a 12-month period.

The Authority must set the processing fee at an amount that does not exceed the costs of collecting the unpaid toll. (2008-225, s. 2; 2010-133, s. 4; 2013-183, s. 5.6; 2013-360, s. 34.30; 2024-15, s. 13(a).)

§ 136-89.216. Civil penalty for failure to pay open road toll.

(a) **Penalty.** – A person who receives two or more bills for unpaid open road tolls and who has not paid the amount due on those bills within 30 days is subject to a civil penalty of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00). Only one penalty may be assessed in a six-month period.

(b) **Payment.** – The Authority must send a notice by first-class mail to a person who is assessed a civil penalty under this section. A person who is assessed a civil penalty must pay the unpaid toll for which the civil penalty was imposed, the amount of any processing fee due, and the civil penalty within 30 days of the date of the notice.

(c) **Penalty Proceeds.** – A civil penalty imposed under this section is payable to the Authority. The clear proceeds of a civil penalty imposed under this section must be credited to the

Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund established in G.S. 115C-457.1. The guidelines used by the Office of State Budget and Management to determine an agency's actual costs of collecting a civil penalty and the clear proceeds of the civil penalty apply to the determination of the clear proceeds of a civil penalty imposed under this section. (2008-225, s. 2; 2010-133, s. 5.)

§ 136-89.217. Vehicle registration renewal blocked for unpaid open road toll.

(a) Registration Block. – Failure of a person to pay an open road toll billed to the person under G.S. 136-89.214, any processing fee added under G.S. 136-89.215, and any civil penalty imposed under G.S. 136-89.216, as well as any toll, processing fee, or civil penalty owed to another tolling jurisdiction with which the Authority has a valid reciprocal toll enforcement agreement under G.S. 136-89.220, is grounds under G.S. 20-54 to withhold the registration renewal of a motor vehicle registered in that person's name. The Authority must notify the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles of a person who owes a toll, a processing fee, or a civil penalty. When notified, the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles must withhold the registration renewal of any motor vehicle registered in that person's name.

(b) Repealed by S.L. 2010-133, s. 6, effective December 1, 2010. (2008-225, s. 2; 2010-133, s. 6; 2012-85, s. 10.)

§ 136-89.218. Procedures for contesting liability for unpaid open road toll.

(a) Informal Review. – A person who receives a bill for an unpaid open road toll and who disputes liability for the toll may contest the toll by sending to the Authority a request for review of the toll. The person may include a sworn affidavit described in G.S. 136-89.212 that establishes that someone else had the care, custody, and control of the motor vehicle subject to the toll when the toll was incurred. The person must send the request for review to the Authority within 30 days of the date of the bill sent by the Authority. A person who does not send a request for review to the Authority within this time limit waives the right to a review. If a person sends a timely request for review to the Authority, the Authority may not collect the disputed toll and any processing fee added to the bill for the toll until the conclusion of the review process in this section.

(b) Administrative Hearing. – If the Authority conducts an informal review under subsection (a) of this section and determines that the person who requested the review is liable for the toll, the Authority must send the person a notice informing the person of the Authority's determination. The person may contest this determination by filing a petition for a contested case hearing at the Office of Administrative Hearings in accordance with Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

(c) Judicial Review. – Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes governs judicial review of a final decision made in a contested case authorized under subsection (b) of this section. (2008-225, s. 2; 2010-133, s. 7.)

§ 136-89.219: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 136-89.220. Reciprocal toll enforcement agreements.

The Authority may enter into reciprocal agreement with other tolling jurisdictions to enforce toll violations. Such an agreement shall provide that, when another toll agency certifies that the registered owner of a vehicle registered in this State has failed to pay a toll, processing fee, or civil penalty due to that toll agency, the unpaid toll, processing fee, or civil penalty may be enforced by the Authority placing a renewal block as if it were an unpaid toll, processing fee, or civil penalty

owed to this State under G.S. 136-89.217. Such agreement shall only be enforceable, however, if all of the following are true:

- (1) The other toll agency has its own effective reciprocal procedure for toll violation enforcement and does, in fact, reciprocate in enforcing toll violations within this State by withholding the registration renewal of registered owners of motor vehicles from the state of the other toll agency.
- (2) The other toll agency provides due process and appeal protections to avoid the likelihood that a false, mistaken, or unjustified claim will be pursued against the owner of a vehicle registered in this State.
- (3) The owner of a vehicle registered in this State may present evidence to the other toll agency by mail or other means to invoke rights of due process without having to appear personally in the jurisdiction where the violation allegedly occurred.
- (4) The reciprocal violation enforcement arrangement between the Authority and the other toll agency provides that each party shall charge the other for costs associated with registration holds in their respective jurisdictions. (2012-85, s. 11.)