

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011**

**HOUSE BILL 457
RATIFIED BILL**

AN ACT PROVIDING THAT THE EASTERN JOINT MUNICIPAL POWER AGENCY SHALL HOLD A PUBLIC MEETING PRIOR TO CHANGING RATES AND THE MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC UTILITIES THAT ARE MEMBERS OF THE EASTERN POWER AGENCY SHALL HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE CHANGING ELECTRIC RATES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 159B-17 reads as rewritten:

"§ 159B-17. Revenues.

(a) A municipality is hereby authorized to fix, charge and collect rents, rates, fees and charges for electric power and energy and other services, facilities and commodities sold, furnished or supplied through the facilities of its electric system or its interest in any joint project. Before it revises its rates, fees or charges as authorized under this subsection, a municipality shall hold a public hearing on the matter. A notice of the hearing shall be published at least once a week for two successive weeks in a newspaper having general circulation in the municipality. The notice shall state that the public hearing will be held in connection with the municipality's action to revise its rates, fees, or charges authorized in this section and state the amount of the proposed revision. At the hearing, any retail electric customer of the municipality may appear and be heard on the proposed revision to the rates, fees, or charges. The provisions of G.S. 160A-81 shall apply to any public hearing held under this subsection. The provisions of this subsection relating to a public hearing shall not apply to action required to be taken for a municipality by the Local Government Commission, in accordance with G.S. 159-181(c), or to action required to be taken by a municipality to revise its rates, fees or charges authorized in this subsection if the revision is required to be implemented immediately as a result of a catastrophic event or to avoid impairing the ability of the municipality to comply with applicable law or its contractual obligations relating to its outstanding bonds or other indebtedness. For so long as any bonds of a municipality are outstanding and unpaid, the rents, rates, fees and charges shall be so fixed as to provide revenues sufficient to pay all costs of and charges and expenses in connection with the proper operation and maintenance of its electric system, and its interest in any joint project, and all necessary repairs, replacements or renewals thereof, to pay when due the principal of, premium, if any, and interest on all bonds and other evidences of indebtedness payable from said revenues, to create and maintain reserves as may be required by any resolution or trust agreement authorizing and securing bonds, to pay when due the principal of, premium, if any, and interest on all general obligation bonds heretofore or hereafter issued to finance additions, improvements and betterments to its electric system, and to pay any and all amounts which the municipality may be obligated to pay from said revenues by law or contract.

(b) A joint agency is hereby authorized to fix, charge, and collect rents, rates, fees and charges for electric power and energy and other services, facilities and commodities sold, furnished or supplied through the facilities of its projects or otherwise as authorized by this Chapter. A joint agency may only take action to change the rates, fees, or charges authorized in this subsection in a public meeting. Notice of the public meeting shall be given to each municipality that is a member of the joint agency. A notice of the meeting shall be published at least once a week for two successive weeks in a newspaper having general circulation in each municipality that is a member of the joint agency. The notice shall state that the public meeting will be held in connection with the joint agency's action to revise its rates, fees, or charges authorized in this subsection and state the amount of the proposed revision. The provisions of



this subsection relating to publication of a notice shall not apply to action required to be taken by a joint agency to revise its rates, fees or charges authorized in this subsection if the revision is required to be implemented immediately as a result of a catastrophic event or to avoid impairing the ability of the joint agency to comply with applicable law or its contractual obligations relating to its outstanding bonds or other indebtedness. For so long as any bonds of a joint agency are outstanding and unpaid, the rents, rates, fees and charges shall be so fixed as to provide revenues sufficient to pay all costs of and charges and expenses in connection with the proper operation and maintenance of its projects, and all necessary repairs, replacements or renewals thereof, to pay when due the principal of, premium, if any, and interest on all bonds and other evidences of indebtedness payable from said revenues, to create and maintain reserves as may be required by any resolution or trust agreement authorizing and securing bonds, and to pay any and all amounts which the joint agency may be obligated to pay from said revenues by law or contract.

(c) Any pledge of revenues, securities or other moneys made by a municipality, joint agency or joint municipal assistance agency pursuant to this Chapter shall be valid and binding from the date the pledge is made. The revenues, securities, and other moneys so pledged and then held or thereafter received by the municipality, joint agency or joint municipal assistance agency or any fiduciary shall immediately be subject to the lien of the pledge without any physical delivery thereof or further act, and the lien of the pledge shall be valid and binding as against all parties having claims of any kind in tort, contract, or otherwise against the municipality, joint agency or joint municipal assistance agency without regard to whether such parties have notice thereof. The resolution or trust agreement or any financing statement, continuation statement or other instrument by which a pledge of revenues, securities or other moneys is created need not be filed or recorded in any manner."

SECTION 2. G.S. 160A-314 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(a3) Revisions in the rates, fees, or charges for electric service for cities that are members of the North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency must comply with the public hearing provisions applicable to those cities under G.S. 159B-17."

SECTION 3. Section 1 of this act becomes effective October 1, 2012, and only applies to all rates, fees, or charges for electric service provided by the North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency (NCEMPA) or a member city or town of the NCEMPA on or after that date. The following cities and towns are members of the North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency: Apex, Ayden, Belhaven, Benson, Clayton, Edenton, Elizabeth City, Farmville, Fremont, Greenville, Hamilton, Hertford, Hobgood, Hookerton, Kinston, LaGrange, Laurinburg, Louisburg, Lumberton, New Bern, Pikeville, Red Springs, Robersonville, Rocky Mount, Scotland Neck, Selma, Smithfield, Southport, Tarboro, Wake Forest, Washington, and Wilson. Section 2 of this act is effective October 1, 2012. The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 2nd day of July, 2012.

s/ Walter H. Dalton
President of the Senate

s/ Thom Tillis
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Beverly E. Perdue
Governor

Approved _____ .m. this _____ day of _____, 2012