rrc staff OPINION

*Please Note: This communication is either 1) only the recommendation of an RRC staff attorney as to action that the attorney believes the Commission should take on the cited rule at its next meeting, or 2) an opinion of that attorney as to some matter concerning that rule. The agency and members of the public are invited to submit their own comments and recommendations (according to RRC rules) to the Commission.*

AGENCY: BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

RULE CITATION: 02 NCAC 38 .0701

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve, but note staff’s comment

X Object, based on:

Lack of statutory authority

X Unclear or ambiguous

Unnecessary

Failure to comply with the APA

Extend the period of review

COMMENT:

In (1)(c), it is not clear what is meant by "anticipated" weather and ground moisture conditions.

Robert A. Bryan, Jr.

Commission Counsel

rrc staff OPINION

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AGENCY: BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

RULE CITATION: 02 NCAC 43L .0309

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve, but note staff’s comment

X Object, based on:

X Lack of statutory authority

X Unclear or ambiguous

Unnecessary

Failure to comply with the APA

Extend the period of review

COMMENT:

In (a), it is not clear what the amount of the "established admission fee" is. Paragraphs (d) and (e) had established the fees, but they are being deleted. G.S. 150B-2(8a) specifically includes the establishment of a fee in the definition of "rule." Pursuant to G.S. 150B-18 a rule (thus any fee established is not valid if it is not adopted in substantial compliance with the Administrative Procedure Act (APA). G.S. 106-6.1 gives the Board the authority to establish a rate schedule for facilities operated by the Department, subject to the provisions of Chapter 146 of the General Statutes. There does not appear to be anything in Chapter 146 that would remove the establishment of this fee from the requirement that it be adjusted as a rule.

Robert A. Bryan, Jr.

Commission Counsel

§ 106-6.1. Fees.

(a)        A board or commission within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services may establish fees or charges for the services it provides. The Board of Agriculture, subject to the provisions of Chapter 146 of the General Statutes, may establish a rate schedule for the use of facilities operated by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

§ 150B-2. Definitions.

As used in this Chapter,

(1)        "Administrative law judge" means a person appointed under G.S. 7A-752, 7A-753, or 7A-757.

(1a)      "Agency" means an agency or an officer in the executive branch of the government of this State and includes the Council of State, the Governor's Office, a board, a commission, a department, a division, a council, and any other unit of government in the executive branch. A local unit of government is not an agency.

(1b)      "Adopt" means to take final action to create, amend, or repeal a rule.

(1c)      "Codifier of Rules" means the Chief Administrative Law Judge of the Office of Administrative Hearings or a designated representative of the Chief Administrative Law Judge.

(1d)     "Commission" means the Rules Review Commission.

(2)        "Contested case" means an administrative proceeding pursuant to this Chapter to resolve a dispute between an agency and another person that involves the person's rights, duties, or privileges, including licensing or the levy of a monetary penalty. "Contested case" does not include rulemaking, declaratory rulings, or the award or denial of a scholarship, a grant, or a loan.

(2a)      Repealed by Session Laws 1991, c. 418, s. 3.

(2b)      "Hearing officer" means a person or group of persons designated by an agency that is subject to Article 3A of this Chapter to preside in a contested case hearing conducted under that Article.

(3)        "License" means any certificate, permit or other evidence, by whatever name called, of a right or privilege to engage in any activity, except licenses issued under Chapter 20 and Subchapter I of Chapter 105 of the General Statutes and occupational licenses.

(4)        "Licensing" means any administrative action issuing, failing to issue, suspending, or revoking a license or occupational license. "Licensing" does not include controversies over whether an examination was fair or whether the applicant passed the examination.

(4a)      "Occupational license" means any certificate, permit, or other evidence, by whatever name called, of a right or privilege to engage in a profession, occupation, or field of endeavor that is issued by an occupational licensing agency.

(4b)      "Occupational licensing agency" means any board, commission, committee or other agency of the State of North Carolina which is established for the primary purpose of regulating the entry of persons into, and/or the conduct of persons within a particular profession, occupation or field of endeavor, and which is authorized to issue and revoke licenses. "Occupational licensing agency" does not include State agencies or departments which may as only a part of their regular function issue permits or licenses.

(5)        "Party" means any person or agency named or admitted as a party or properly seeking as of right to be admitted as a party and includes the agency as appropriate. This subdivision does not permit an agency that makes a final decision, or an officer or employee of the agency, to petition for initial judicial review of that decision.

(6)        "Person aggrieved" means any person or group of persons of common interest directly or indirectly affected substantially in his or its person, property, or employment by an administrative decision.

(7)        "Person" means any natural person, partnership, corporation, body politic and any unincorporated association, organization, or society which may sue or be sued under a common name.

(8)        "Residence" means domicile or principal place of business.

(8a)      "Rule" means any agency regulation, standard, or statement of general applicability that implements or interprets an enactment of the General Assembly or Congress or a regulation adopted by a federal agency or that describes the procedure or practice requirements of an agency. The term includes the establishment of a fee and the amendment or repeal of a prior rule. The term does not include the following:

a.         Statements concerning only the internal management of an agency or group of agencies within the same principal office or department enumerated in G.S. 143A-11 or 143B-6, including policies and procedures manuals, if the statement does not directly or substantially affect the procedural or substantive rights or duties of a person not employed by the agency or group of agencies.

b.         Budgets and budget policies and procedures issued by the Director of the Budget, by the head of a department, as defined by G.S. 143A-2 or G.S. 143B-3, by an occupational licensing board, as defined by G.S. 93B-1, or by the State Board of Elections.

c.         Nonbinding interpretative statements within the delegated authority of an agency that merely define, interpret, or explain the meaning of a statute or rule.

d.         A form, the contents or substantive requirements of which are prescribed by rule or statute.

e.         Statements of agency policy made in the context of another proceeding, including:

1.         Declaratory rulings under G.S. 150B-4.

2.         Orders establishing or fixing rates or tariffs.

f.          Requirements, communicated to the public by the use of signs or symbols, concerning the use of public roads, bridges, ferries, buildings, or facilities.

g.         Statements that set forth criteria or guidelines to be used by the staff of an agency in performing audits, investigations, or inspections; in settling financial disputes or negotiating financial arrangements; or in the defense, prosecution, or settlement of cases.

h.         Scientific, architectural, or engineering standards, forms, or procedures, including design criteria and construction standards used to construct or maintain highways, bridges, or ferries.

i.          Job classification standards, job qualifications, and salaries established for positions under the jurisdiction of the State Personnel Commission.

j.          Establishment of the interest rate that applies to tax assessments under G.S. 105-241.21 and the variable component of the excise tax on motor fuel under G.S. 105-449.80.

k.         The State Medical Facilities Plan, if the Plan has been prepared with public notice and hearing as provided in G.S. 131E-176(25), reviewed by the Commission for compliance with G.S. 131E‑176(25), and approved by the Governor.

(8b)      "Substantial evidence" means relevant evidence a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion.

(9)        Repealed by Session Laws 1991, c. 418, s. 3. (1973, c. 1331, s. 1; 1975, 2nd Sess., c. 983, ss. 61, 62; 1977, c. 915, s. 5; 1983, c. 641, s. 1; 1985, c. 746, s. 1; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 1022, s. 1(2)-1(5); 1987, c. 878, ss. 1, 2, 21; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1111, s. 17; 1991, c. 418, s. 3; c. 477, ss. 3.1, 3.2, 9; 1995, c. 390, s. 29; 1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18, s. 7.10(g); 1997-456, s. 27; 2003-229, s. 12; 2007-491, s. 44(1)b.)

§ 150B-18. Scope and effect.

This Article applies to an agency's exercise of its authority to adopt a rule. A rule is not valid unless it is adopted in substantial compliance with this Article. An agency shall not seek to implement or enforce against any person a policy, guideline, or other nonbinding interpretive statement that meets the definition of a rule contained in G.S. 150B-2(8a) if the policy, guideline, or other nonbinding interpretive statement has not been adopted as a rule in accordance with this Article.