

## 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: North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

RULE CITATION: 07 NCAC 02H .0306 Reproduction Service

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

- Approve, but note staff's comment
- X Object, based on:
  - Lack of statutory authority
  - Unclear or ambiguous
- X Unnecessary
  - Failure to comply with the APA
- Extend the period of review

COMMENT:

*While the Rule was determined to be "necessary without substantial public interest" pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A on July 22, 2017, the Commission staff and the agency cannot identify any enactment of the General Assembly, or of Congress, or a regulation of a federal agency which makes the Rule reasonably necessary pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.9(a)(3). The agency has opined that "...the rule is not required to provide this service."*

*As the Rule is not "reasonably necessary" pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.9(a)(3), staff recommends objection to the above-referenced rule pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.10(2).*

William W. Peaslee  
Commission Counsel

**§ 150B-19.1. Requirements for agencies in the rule-making process.**

(a) In developing and drafting rules for adoption in accordance with this Article, agencies shall adhere to the following principles:

- (1) An agency may adopt only rules that are expressly authorized by federal or State law and that are necessary to serve the public interest.
- (2) An agency shall seek to reduce the burden upon those persons or entities who must comply with the rule.
- (3) Rules shall be written in a clear and unambiguous manner and must be reasonably necessary to implement or interpret federal or State law.
- (4) An agency shall consider the cumulative effect of all rules adopted by the agency related to the specific purpose for which the rule is proposed. The agency shall not adopt a rule that is unnecessary or redundant.
- (5) When appropriate, rules shall be based on sound, reasonably available scientific, technical, economic, and other relevant information. Agencies shall include a reference to this information in the notice of text required by G.S. 150B-21.2(c).
- (6) Rules shall be designed to achieve the regulatory objective in a cost-effective and timely manner.

(b) Each agency subject to this Article shall conduct an annual review of its rules to identify existing rules that are unnecessary, unduly burdensome, or inconsistent with the principles set forth in subsection (a) of this section. The agency shall repeal any rule identified by this review.

(c) Each agency subject to this Article shall post on its Web site, no later than the publication date of the notice of text in the North Carolina Register, all of the following:

- (1) The text of a proposed rule.
- (2) An explanation of the proposed rule and the reason for the proposed rule.
- (3) The federal certification required by subsection (g) of this section.
- (4) Instructions on how and where to submit oral or written comments on the proposed rule, including a description of the procedure by which a person can object to a proposed rule and subject the proposed rule to legislative review.
- (5) Any fiscal note that has been prepared for the proposed rule.

If an agency proposes any change to a rule or fiscal note prior to the date it proposes to adopt a rule, the agency shall publish the proposed change on its Web site as soon as practicable after the change is drafted. If an agency's staff proposes any such change to be presented to the rule-making agency, the staff shall publish the proposed change on the agency's Web site as soon as practicable after the change is drafted.

(d) Each agency shall determine whether its policies and programs overlap with the policies and programs of another agency. In the event two or more agencies' policies and programs overlap, the agencies shall coordinate the rules adopted by each agency to avoid unnecessary, unduly burdensome, or inconsistent rules.

(e) Each agency shall quantify the costs and benefits to all parties of a proposed rule to the greatest extent possible. Prior to submission of a proposed rule for publication in accordance with G.S. 150B-21.2, the agency shall review the details of any fiscal note prepared in connection with the proposed rule and approve the fiscal note before submission.

(f) If the agency determines that a proposed rule will have a substantial economic impact as defined in G.S. 150B-21.4(b1), the agency shall consider at least two alternatives to the proposed rule. The alternatives may have been identified by the agency or by members of the public.

(g) Whenever an agency proposes a rule that is purported to implement a federal law, or required by or necessary for compliance with federal law, or on which the receipt of federal funds is conditioned, the agency shall:

- (1) Prepare a certification identifying the federal law requiring adoption of the proposed rule. The certification shall contain a statement setting forth the reasons why the proposed rule is required by federal law. If all or part of the proposed rule is not required by federal law or exceeds the requirements of federal law, then the certification shall state the reasons for that opinion.
- (2) Post the certification on the agency Web site in accordance with subsection (c) of this section.
- (3) Maintain a copy of the federal law and provide to the Office of State Budget and Management the citation to the federal law requiring or pertaining to the proposed rule.

(h) Repealed by Session Laws 2014-120, s. 6(a), effective September 18, 2014, and applicable to proposed rules published on or after that date. (2011-398, s. 2; 2012-187, s. 3; 2013-143, s. 1.1; 2014-120, s. 6(a).)

#### **§ 150B-21.9. Standards and timetable for review by Commission.**

(a) Standards. - The Commission must determine whether a rule meets all of the following criteria:

- (1) It is within the authority delegated to the agency by the General Assembly.
- (2) It is clear and unambiguous.
- (3) It is reasonably necessary to implement or interpret an enactment of the General Assembly, or of Congress, or a regulation of a federal agency. The Commission shall consider the cumulative effect of all rules adopted by the agency related to the specific purpose for which the rule is proposed.
- (4) It was adopted in accordance with Part 2 of this Article.

The Commission shall not consider questions relating to the quality or efficacy of the rule but shall restrict its review to determination of the standards set forth in this subsection.

The Commission may ask the Office of State Budget and Management to determine if a rule has a substantial economic impact and is therefore required to have a fiscal note. The Commission must ask the Office of State Budget and Management to make this determination if a fiscal note was not prepared for a rule and the Commission receives a written request for a determination of whether the rule has a substantial economic impact.

(a1) Entry of a rule in the North Carolina Administrative Code after review by the Commission creates a rebuttable presumption that the rule was adopted in accordance with Part 2 of this Article.

(b) Timetable. - The Commission must review a permanent rule submitted to it on or before the twentieth of a month by the last day of the next month. The Commission must review a rule submitted to it after the twentieth of a month by the last day of the second subsequent month. The Commission must review a temporary rule in accordance with the timetable and procedure set forth in G.S. 150B-21.1. (1991, c. 418, s. 1; 1995, c. 507, s. 27.8(f); 2000-140, s. 93.1(a); 2001-424, s. 12.2(b); 2003-229, s. 9.)

**§ 150B-21.10. Commission action on permanent rule.**

At the first meeting at which a permanent rule is before the Commission for review, the Commission must take one of the following actions:

- (1) Approve the rule, if the Commission determines that the rule meets the standards for review.
- (2) Object to the rule, if the Commission determines that the rule does not meet the standards for review.
- (3) Extend the period for reviewing the rule, if the Commission determines it needs additional information on the rule to be able to decide whether the rule meets the standards for review.

In reviewing a new rule or an amendment to an existing rule, the Commission may request an agency to make technical changes to the rule and may condition its approval of the rule on the agency's making the requested technical changes.

**§ 150B-21.3A. Periodic review and expiration of existing rules.**

(a) Definitions. - For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

- (1) Commission. - Means the Rules Review Commission.
- (2) Committee. - Means the Joint Legislative Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee.
- (2a) Necessary rule. - Means any rule other than an unnecessary rule.
- (3), (4) Repealed by Session Laws 2019-140, s. 3(a), effective July 19, 2019, and applicable to agency rule reports submitted to the Office of Administrative Hearings pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A(c)(1) on or after October 1, 2019.
- (5) Public comment. - Means written comments objecting to the rule, in whole or in part, or objecting to an agency's determination of the rule as necessary or unnecessary, received by an agency from any member of the public, including an association or other organization representing the regulated community or other members of the public.
- (6) Unnecessary rule. - Means a rule that the agency determines to be obsolete, redundant, or otherwise not needed.

(b) Automatic Expiration. - Except as provided in subsection (e) of this section, any rule for which the agency that adopted the rule has not conducted a review in accordance with this section shall expire on the date set in the schedule established by the Commission pursuant to subsection (d) of this section.

(c) Review Process. - Each agency subject to this Article shall conduct a review of the agency's existing rules at least once every 10 years in accordance with the following process:

- (1) Step 1: The agency shall conduct an analysis of each existing rule and make an initial determination as to whether the rule is necessary or unnecessary. The agency shall then post the results of the initial determination on its Web site and invite the public to comment on the rules and the agency's initial determination. The agency shall also submit the results of the initial determination to the Office of Administrative Hearings for posting on its Web site. The agency shall accept public comment for no less than 60 days following the posting. The agency shall review the public comments and prepare a brief response addressing the merits of

each comment. After completing this process, the agency shall submit a report to the Commission. The report shall include the following items:

- a. The agency's initial determination.
- b. All public comments received in response to the agency's initial determination.
- c. The agency's response to the public comments.

(2) Step 2: The Commission shall review the reports received from the agencies pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection. If a public comment relates to a rule that the agency determined to be unnecessary, the Commission shall determine whether the public comment has merit and, if so, designate the rule as necessary. For purposes of this subsection, a public comment has merit if it addresses the specific substance of the rule. The Commission shall prepare a final determination report and submit the report to the Committee for consultation in accordance with subdivision (3) of this subsection. The report shall include the following items:

- a. The agency's initial determination.
- b. All public comments received in response to the agency's initial determination.
- c. The agency's response to the public comments.
- d. A summary of the Commission's determinations regarding public comments.
- e. Repealed by Session Laws 2019-140, s. 3(a), effective July 19, 2019, and applicable to agency rule reports submitted to the Office of Administrative Hearings pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A(c)(1) on or after October 1, 2019.
- f. A determination that all rules that the agency determined to be unnecessary and for which no public comment was received or for which the Commission determined that the public comment was without merit shall expire on the first day of the month following the date the report becomes effective in accordance with this section.
- g. A determination that all rules that the agency determined to be necessary or that the Commission designated as necessary shall be readopted as though the rules were new rules in accordance with this Article.

(3) Step 3: The final determination report shall not become effective until the agency has consulted with the Committee. The determinations contained in the report pursuant to sub-subdivisions f. and g. of subdivision (2) of this subsection shall become effective on the date the report is reviewed by the Committee. If the Committee does not hold a meeting to hear the consultation required by this subdivision within 60 days of receipt of the final determination report, the consultation requirement is deemed satisfied, and the determinations contained in the report become effective on the 61st day following the date the Committee received the report. If the Committee disagrees with a determination regarding a specific rule contained in the report, the Committee may recommend that the General Assembly direct the agency to conduct a review of the specific rule in accordance with this section in the next year following the consultation.

(d) Timetable. - The Commission shall establish a schedule for the review and readoption of existing rules in accordance with this section on a decennial basis as follows:

- (1) With regard to the review process, the Commission shall assign each Title of the Administrative Code a date by which the review required by this section must be completed. In establishing the schedule, the Commission shall consider the scope and complexity of rules subject to this section and the resources required to conduct the review required by this section. The Commission shall have broad authority to modify the schedule and extend the time for review in appropriate circumstances. Except as provided in subsections (e) and (f) of this section, if the agency fails to conduct the review by the date set by the Commission, the rules contained in that Title which have not been reviewed will expire. The Commission shall report to the Committee any agency that fails to conduct the review. The Commission may exempt rules that have been adopted or amended within the previous 10 years from the review required by this section. However, any rule exempted on this basis must be reviewed in accordance with this section no more than 10 years following the last time the rule was amended.
- (2) With regard to the readoption of rules as required by sub-subdivision (c)(2)g. of this section, once the final determination report becomes effective, the Commission shall establish a date by which the agency must readopt the rules. The Commission shall consult with the agency and shall consider the agency's rule-making priorities in establishing the readoption date. The agency may amend a rule as part of the readoption process. If a rule is readopted without substantive change or if the rule is amended to impose a less stringent burden on regulated persons, the agency is not required to prepare a fiscal note as provided by G.S. 150B-21.4.

(e) Exclusions. - The Commission shall report annually to the Committee on any rules that do not expire pursuant to this subsection. The following rules shall not expire as provided in this section:

- (1) Rules adopted to conform to or implement federal law.
- (2) Rules deemed by the Boards of Trustees established under G.S. 128-28 and G.S. 135-6 to protect inchoate or accrued rights of members of the Retirement Systems administered by the State Treasurer.

(e1) Repealed by Session Laws 2019-140, s. 3(a), effective July 19, 2019, and applicable to agency rule reports submitted to the Office of Administrative Hearings pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A(c)(1) on or after October 1, 2019.

(f) Other Reviews. - Notwithstanding any provision of this section, an agency may subject a rule that it determines to be unnecessary to review under this section at any time by notifying the Commission that it wishes to be placed on the schedule for the current year. The Commission may also subject a rule to review under this section at any time by notifying the agency that the rule has been placed on the schedule for the current year. (2013-413, s. 3(b); 2014-115, s. 17; 2014-120, s. 2; 2015-164, s. 7; 2015-286, s. 1.6(a); 2019-140, s. 3(a).)

1 07 NCAC 02H .0306 is amended as published in 36:14 NCR 1198 as follows:

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3 **07 NCAC 02H .0306 REPRODUCTION SERVICE**

4 The Library ~~shall~~may reproduce in Braille or audio recording materials requested by Library patrons for their  
5 personal use as approved by the ~~Regional Librarian~~Director based on staff ~~availability and consideration of higher~~  
6 ~~priority work~~availability.

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8 *History Note: Authority G.S. 125-2; 143B-10;*

9 *Eff. April 1, 2011;*

10 *Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. July 22,*

11 *~~2017.2017;~~*

12 *Amended Eff. June 1, 2022.*