

**§ 62-152.1. Uniform rates; joint rate agreements among carriers.**

(a) Definitions. – As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires, the term:

- (1) "Carrier" means any common carrier as defined in G.S. 62-3(6).
- (2) For purposes of this section, carriers by motor vehicles are carriers of the same class, carriers by pipeline are carriers of the same class, carriers by water are carriers of the same class, carriers by air are carriers of the same class, and freight forwarders are carriers of the same class.
- (3) The term "antitrust laws" means the provisions of Chapter 75 of the General Statutes (N.C.G.S. 75-1, et seq.), relating to combinations in restraint of trade.

(b) For the purpose of achieving a stable rate structure it shall be the policy of this State to fix uniform rates for the same or similar services by carriers of the same class. In order to realize and effectuate this policy and regulatory goal any carrier subject to regulation by this Commission and party to an agreement between or among two or more carriers relating to rates, fares, classifications, divisions, allowances or charges (including charges between carriers and compensation paid or received for the use of facilities and equipment), or rules and regulations pertaining thereto, or procedures for the joint consideration, initiation or establishment thereof, may, under such rules and regulations as the Commission may prescribe, apply to the Commission for approval of the agreement, and the Commission shall by order approve any such agreement (if approval thereof is not prohibited by subsection (d) or (e) of this section) if it finds that, by reason of furtherance of the transportation policy and goal declared in this section and in G.S. 62-2 or G.S. 62-259 as may be pertinent, the relief provided in subsection (h) shall apply with respect to the making and carrying out of such agreement; otherwise, the application shall be denied. The approval of the Commission shall be granted only upon such terms and conditions as the Commission may prescribe as necessary to enable it to grant its approval in accordance with the standard above set forth in this subsection.

(c) Each conference, bureau, committee, or other organization established or continued pursuant to any agreement approved by the Commission under this section shall maintain such accounts, records, files and memoranda and shall submit to the Commission such information and reports as may be prescribed by the Commission, and all the accounts, records, files and memoranda shall be subject to inspection by the Commission or its duly authorized representatives.

(d) The Commission shall not approve under this section any agreement between or among carriers of different classes unless it finds that the agreement is of the character described in subsection (b) of this section and is limited to matters relating to transportation under joint rates or over through routes.

(e) The Commission shall not approve under this section any agreement which establishes a procedure for the determination of any matter through joint consideration unless it finds that under the agreement there is accorded to each party the free and unrestrained right to take independent action after any determination arrived at through such procedure.

(f) The Commission is authorized, upon complaint or upon its own initiative without complaint, to investigate and determine whether any agreement previously approved by it under this section, or terms and conditions upon which the approval was granted is not or are not in conformity with the standards set forth in subsection (b) of this section, or whether any such terms and conditions are not necessary for the purposes of conformity with such standards, and, after such investigation, the Commission shall by order terminate or modify its approval of such agreement if it finds such action necessary to insure conformity with such standards, and shall modify the terms and conditions upon which such approval was granted to

the extent it finds necessary to insure conformity with such standards or to the extent to which it finds such terms and conditions not necessary to insure such conformity. The effective date of any order terminating or modifying approval, or modifying terms and conditions, shall be postponed for such period as the Commission determines to be reasonably necessary to avoid undue hardships.

(g) No order shall be entered under this section except after interested parties have been afforded reasonable notice and opportunity for hearing.

(h) Parties to any agreement approved by the Commission under this section and other parties are, if the approval of such agreement is not prohibited by subsection (d) or (e) of this section, hereby relieved from the operation of the antitrust laws with respect to the making of such agreement, and with respect to the carrying out of such agreement in conformity with the terms and conditions prescribed by the Commission.

(i) Any action of the Commission under this section in approving an agreement, or in denying an application for such approval, or in terminating or modifying its approval of an agreement, or prescribing the terms and conditions upon which its approval is to be granted, or in modifying such terms and conditions, shall be construed as having effect solely with reference to the applicability of the relief provisions of subsection (h) of this section. (1977, c. 219, s. 1; 1998-128, s. 7.)