

Article 2.

Organization of Utilities Commission.

§ 62-10. Number; appointment; terms; qualifications; chairman; vacancies; compensation; other employment prohibited.

(a) The North Carolina Utilities Commission shall consist of seven commissioners who shall be appointed by the Governor subject to confirmation by the General Assembly by joint resolution. The names of commissioners to be appointed by the Governor shall be submitted by the Governor to the General Assembly for confirmation by the General Assembly on or before May 1, of the year in which the terms for which the appointments are to be made are to expire. Upon failure of the Governor to submit names as herein provided, the Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the House jointly shall submit the names of a like number of commissioners to the General Assembly on or before May 15 of the same year for confirmation by the General Assembly. Regardless of the way in which names of commissioners are submitted, confirmation of commissioners must be accomplished prior to adjournment of the then current session of the General Assembly. This subsection shall be subject to the provisions of subsection (c) of this section.

(b) The terms of the commissioners now serving shall expire at the conclusion of the term for which they were appointed which shall remain as before with two regular eight-year terms expiring on July 1 of each fourth year after July 1, 1965, and the fifth term expiring on July 1 of each eighth year after July 1, 1963. The terms of office of utilities commissioners thereafter shall be six years commencing on July 1 of the year in which the predecessor terms expired, and ending on July 1 of the sixth year thereafter.

(c) In order to increase the number of commissioners to seven, the names of two additional commissioners shall be submitted to the General Assembly on or before May 27, 1975, for confirmation by the General Assembly as provided in G.S. 62-10(a). The commissioners so appointed and confirmed shall serve new terms commencing on July 1, 1975, one of which shall be for a period of two years (with the immediate successor serving for a period of six years), and one of which shall be for a period of two years.

Thereafter, the terms of office of the additional commissioners shall be for six years as provided in G.S. 62-10(b).

(d) A commissioner in office shall continue to serve until his successor is duly confirmed and qualified but such holdover shall not affect the expiration date of such succeeding term.

(e) On July 1, 1965, and every four years thereafter, one of the commissioners shall be designated by the Governor to serve as chairman of the Commission for the succeeding four years and until his successor is duly confirmed and qualifies. Upon death or resignation of the commissioner appointed as chairman, the Governor shall designate the chairman from the remaining commissioners and appoint a successor as hereinafter provided to fill the vacancy on the Commission.

(f) In case of death, incapacity, resignation or vacancy for any other reason in the office of any commissioner prior to the expiration of his term of office, the name of his successor shall be submitted by the Governor within four weeks after the vacancy arises to the General Assembly for confirmation by the General Assembly. Upon failure of the Governor to submit the name of the successor, the Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the House jointly shall submit the name of a successor to the General Assembly within six weeks after the vacancy arises. Regardless of the way in which names of commissioners are submitted, confirmation of commissioners must be accomplished prior to the adjournment of the then current session of the General Assembly.

(g) If a vacancy arises or exists pursuant to either subsection (a) or (c) or (f) of this section when the General Assembly is not in session, and the appointment is deemed urgent by the Governor, the commissioner may be appointed and serve on an interim basis pending confirmation by the General Assembly.

(h) The salary of each commissioner and that of the commissioner designated as chairman shall be set by the General Assembly in the Current Operations Appropriations Act. In lieu of merit and other increment raises paid to regular State employees, each commissioner, including the commissioner designated as chairman, shall receive as longevity pay an amount equal to four and eight-tenths percent (4.8%) of the annual salary set forth in the Current Operations Appropriations Act payable monthly after five years of service, and nine and six-tenths percent (9.6%) after 10 years of service. "Service" means service as a member of the Utilities Commission.

(h1) In addition to compensation for their services, each member of the Commission who lives at least 50 miles from the City of Raleigh shall be paid a weekly travel allowance for each week the member travels to the City of Raleigh from the member's home for business of the Commission. The allowance shall be calculated for each member by multiplying the actual round-trip mileage from that member's home to the City of Raleigh by the rate-per-mile which is the business standard mileage rate set by the Internal Revenue Service in Rev. Proc. 93-51, December 27, 1993.

(i) The standards of judicial conduct provided for judges in Article 30 of Chapter 7A of the General Statutes shall apply to members of the Commission. Members of the Commission shall be liable to impeachment for the causes and in the manner provided for judges of the General Court of Justice in Chapter 123 of the General Statutes. Members of the Commission shall not engage in any other employment, business, profession, or vocation while in office.

(j) Except as provided in subsection (h1) of this section, members of the Commission shall be reimbursed for travel and subsistence expenses at the rates allowed to State officers and employees by G.S. 138-6(a). (1941, c. 97, s. 2; 1949, c. 1009, s. 1; 1959, c. 1319; 1963, c. 1165, s. 1; 1967, c. 1238; 1975, c. 243, s. 3; c. 867, ss. 1, 2; 1977, c. 468, s. 1; c. 913, s. 2; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1116, s. 91; 1989, c. 781, s. 41.2; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 769, s. 7.4(b); 1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18, s. 28.2(b); 1997-443, s. 33.5; 1999-237, s. 28.21(a), (b); 2011-145, s. 14.8A(a).)