

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1991 SESSION

CHAPTER 609
HOUSE BILL 413

AN ACT TO INCREASE THE FINES FOR LITTERING AND TO CLARIFY THE
STATUTES RELATING TO LITTERING.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 14-399 reads as rewritten:

"§ 14-399. Littering.

(a) No person, including but not limited to, any firm, organization, private corporation, or governing body, agents or employees of any municipal corporation shall intentionally or recklessly throw, scatter, spill or place or intentionally or recklessly cause to be blown, scattered, spilled, thrown or placed or otherwise dispose of any litter upon any public property or private property not owned by him within this State or in the waters of this State including, but not limited to, any public highway, public park, lake, river, ocean, beach, campground, forest land, recreational area, trailer park, highway, road, street or alley except:

- (1) When such property is designated by the State or political subdivision thereof for the disposal of garbage and refuse, and such person is authorized to use such property for such purpose; or
- (2) Into a litter receptacle in such a manner that the litter will be prevented from being carried away or deposited by the elements upon any part of such private or public property or waters.

(b) When litter is blown, scattered, spilled, thrown or placed from a vehicle or watercraft, the operator thereof shall be presumed to have committed such offense. This presumption, however, does not apply to a vehicle transporting agricultural products or supplies when the litter from that vehicle is a nontoxic, biodegradable agricultural product or supply.

(c) Any person who violates this section in an amount not exceeding 15 pounds ~~or 27 cubic feet~~ and not for commercial purposes is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than ~~fifty dollars (\$50.00)~~ one hundred dollars (\$100.00) nor more than ~~two hundred dollars (\$200.00)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for the first offense. Any second or subsequent offense is punishable by a fine of not less than ~~fifty dollars (\$50.00)~~ one hundred dollars (\$100.00) nor more than ~~five hundred dollars (\$500.00)~~ one thousand dollars (\$1,000). ~~Notwithstanding the foregoing, any person who violates this section by disposing, in any manner, of litter not exceeding 15 pounds or 27 cubic feet not for commercial purposes upon a beach is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) nor more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for a first or any subsequent offense.~~ In addition, the court may require the

violator to pick up litter or perform other labor commensurate with the offense committed.

(d) Any person who violates this section in an amount exceeding 15 pounds ~~or 27 cubic feet~~, but not exceeding 500 pounds in weight ~~or 100 cubic feet in volume~~, and not for commercial ~~purposes~~, purposes is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than ~~fifty dollars (\$50.00)~~ one hundred dollars (\$100.00) nor more than ~~five hundred dollars (\$500.00)~~ one thousand dollars (\$1,000). In addition, the court shall require the violator to pick up litter or perform other community service commensurate with the offense committed. ~~Further, if the violation involves the use of a motor vehicle, upon a finding of guilt, regardless of whether adjudication is withheld or of whether imposition of sentence is withheld, deferred, or suspended, the court shall forward a record of the finding to the Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles, which shall record a penalty of one point on the violator's drivers license pursuant to the point system established by G.S. 20-16. There shall be no insurance premium surcharge or assessment of points under the classification plan adopted pursuant to G.S. 58-30.4 for a finding of guilt under this subsection.~~

(e) Any person who violates this section in an amount exceeding 500 pounds ~~or 100 cubic feet~~ or in any quantity for commercial purposes, or ~~dumps who discards~~ litter ~~which that~~ is a hazardous waste as defined in G.S. 130A-290 is guilty of a Class J felony. In addition, the court may order the violator to:

- (1) Remove, or render harmless, the litter that he ~~dumped~~ discarded in violation of this section;
- (2) Repair or restore property damaged by, or pay damages for any damage arising out of, his ~~dumping~~ discarding litter in violation of this section; or
- (3) Perform community public service relating to the removal of litter ~~dumped~~ discarded in violation of this section or to the restoration of an area polluted by litter ~~dumped~~ discarded in violation of this section.

(f) A court may enjoin a violation of this section.

(f1) If a violation of this section involves the operation of a motor vehicle, upon a finding of guilt, the court shall forward a record of the finding to the Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles, which shall record a penalty of one point on the violator's drivers license pursuant to the point system established by G.S. 20-16. There shall be no insurance premium surcharge or assessment of points under the classification plan adopted pursuant to G.S. 58-30.4 for a finding of guilt under this section.

(g) A motor vehicle, vessel, aircraft, container, crane, winch, or machine involved in the disposal of more than 500 pounds ~~or more than 100 cubic feet~~ of litter in violation of this section is declared contraband and is subject to seizure and summary forfeiture to the State.

(h) If a person sustains damages arising out of a violation of this section that is punishable as a felony, a court, in a civil action for such damages, shall order the person to pay the injured party threefold the actual damages or two hundred dollars (\$200.00),

whichever amount is greater. In addition, the court shall order the person to pay the injured party's court costs and attorney's fees.

- (i) For the purpose of the section, unless the context requires otherwise:
 - (1) 'Aircraft' means a motor vehicle or other vehicle that is used or designed to fly, but does not include a parachute or any other device used primarily as safety equipment.
 - (2) 'Commercial vehicle' means a vehicle that is owned or used by a business, corporation, association, partnership, or sole proprietorship or any other entity conducting business for economic gain.
 - (3) 'Law enforcement officer' means any officer of the North Carolina Highway Patrol, the Division of Motor Vehicles of the Department of Transportation, a county sheriff's department, a municipal law enforcement department, a law enforcement department of any other political subdivision, the Department, or the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. In addition, and solely for the purposes of this section, 'law enforcement officer' means any employee of a county or municipal park or recreation department designated by the department head as a litter enforcement officer; or wildlife protectors as defined in G.S. 113-128(9);
 - (4) 'Litter' means any garbage, rubbish, trash, refuse, can, bottle, box, container, wrapper, paper, paper product, tire, appliance, mechanical equipment or part, building or construction material, tool, machinery, wood, motor vehicle or motor vehicle part, vessel, aircraft, farm machinery or equipment, sludge from a waste treatment facility, water supply treatment plant, or air pollution control facility, dead animal, or discarded material in any form resulting from domestic, industrial, commercial, mining, agricultural, or governmental operations. 'Litter' does not include political pamphlets, handbills, religious tracts, newspapers, and other such printed materials the unsolicited distribution of which is protected by the Constitution of the United States or the Constitution of North Carolina.
 - (5) 'Vehicle' has the same meaning as in G.S. 20-4.01(49); and
 - (6) 'Watercraft' means any boat or vessel used for transportation across the water.

(j) It shall be the duty of all law enforcement officers to enforce the provisions of this section.

(k) This section does not limit the authority of any State or local agency to enforce other laws, rules or ordinances relating to litter or solid waste management."

Sec. 2. G.S. 7A-148(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) The chief district judges of the various district court districts shall meet at least once a year upon call of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to discuss mutual problems affecting the courts and the improvement of court operations, to prepare and adopt a uniform schedule of traffic offenses, littering under G.S. 14-399(c), hunting and fishing offenses under Chapter 113, boating offenses under Chapter 75A, and alcohol

offenses under Chapter 18B for which magistrates and clerks of court may accept written appearances, waivers of trial or hearing and pleas of guilty or admissions of responsibility, and establish a schedule of penalties or fines therefor, and to take such further action as may be found practicable and desirable to promote the uniform administration of justice."

Sec. 3. This act becomes effective 1 October 1991 and applies to violations that occur on or after that date.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 9th day of July, 1991.

James C. Gardner
President of the Senate

Daniel Blue, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives