

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2009

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SENATE BILL 661  
Judiciary I Committee Substitute Adopted 5/12/09  
House Committee Substitute Favorable 6/3/09

Short Title: Allocate Water Cost/Landlord-Tenant Changes.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 19, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT AUTHORIZING LESSORS OF CONTIGUOUS PREMISES TO ALLOCATE THE COST FOR WATER AND SEWER SERVICE TO EACH TENANT USING EQUIPMENT THAT MEASURES HOT WATER USAGE, REQUIRING LANDLORDS TO IMPROVE THE HABITABILITY OF DWELLING UNITS BY REPAIRING CERTAIN UNSAFE CONDITIONS, STAYING THE EXECUTION OF A JUDGMENT FOR SUMMARY EJECTMENT WHILE A MOTION FOR MODIFICATION OF THE UNDERTAKING IS PENDING, ESTABLISHING FEES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES IN RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES, AND ESTABLISHING THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH A CITY MAY ORDER A DWELLING TO BE VACATED AND CLOSED.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.(a)** G.S. 62-110(g) reads as rewritten:

"(g) In addition to the authority to issue a certificate of public convenience and necessity and establish rates otherwise granted in this Chapter, for the purpose of encouraging water conservation, the Commission may, consistent with the public interest, adopt procedures that allow a lessor to charge for the costs of providing water or sewer service to persons who occupy the same contiguous premises. The following provisions shall apply:

(1) All charges for water or sewer service shall be based on the user's metered consumption of water, which shall be determined by metered measurement of all water consumed and not by any partial measurement of water consumption, unless specifically authorized by the Commission. consumed. The rate charged by the lessor shall not exceed the unit consumption rate charged by the supplier of the service.

(1a) If the contiguous premises were built prior to 1989 and the lessor determines that the measurement of the tenant's total water usage is impractical or not economical, the lessor may allocate the cost for water and sewer service to the tenant using equipment that measures the tenant's hot water usage. In that case, each tenant shall be billed a percentage of the landlord's water and sewer costs for water usage in the dwelling units based upon the hot water used in the tenant's dwelling unit. The percentage of total water usage allocated for each dwelling unit shall be equal to that dwelling unit's individually submetered hot water usage divided by all submetered hot water usage in all dwelling units. The following conditions apply to billing for water and sewer service under this subdivision:



- 1           a.     A lessor shall not utilize a ratio utility billing system or other  
2                   allocation billing system that does not rely on individually  
3                   submetered hot water usage to determine the allocation of water and  
4                   sewer costs.
- 5           b.     The lessor shall not include in a tenant's bill the cost of water and  
6                   sewer service used in common areas or water loss due to leaks in the  
7                   lessor's water mains. A lessor shall not bill or attempt to collect for  
8                   excess water usage resulting from a plumbing malfunction or other  
9                   condition that is not known to the tenant or that has been reported to  
10                  the lessor.
- 11          c.     All equipment used to measure water usage shall comply with  
12                   guidelines promulgated by the American Water Works Association.
- 13          d.     The lessor shall maintain records for a minimum of 12 months that  
14                   demonstrate how each tenant's allocated costs were calculated for  
15                   water and sewer service. Upon advanced written notice to the lessor,  
16                   a tenant may inspect the records during reasonable business hours.
- 17          e.     Bills for water and sewer service sent by the lessor to the tenant shall  
18                   contain all the following information:
- 19                  1.     The amount of water and sewer services allocated to the  
20                          tenant during the billing period.
- 21                  2.     The method used to determine the amount of water and sewer  
22                          services allocated to the tenant.
- 23                  3.     Beginning and ending dates for the billing period.
- 24                  4.     The past-due date, which shall not be less than 25 days after  
25                          the bill is mailed.
- 26                  5.     A local or toll-free telephone number and address that the  
27                          tenant can use to obtain more information about the bill.

28           ...."

29           **SECTION 1.(b)** This section becomes effective July 1, 2010.

30           **SECTION 2.** G.S. 42-34(b) reads as rewritten:

31           "(b) During an appeal to district court, it shall be sufficient to stay execution of a  
32 judgment for ejectment if the defendant appellant pays to the clerk of superior court any rent in  
33 arrears as determined by the magistrate and signs an undertaking that he or she will pay into the  
34 office of the clerk of superior court the amount of the tenant's share of the contract rent as it  
35 becomes due periodically after the judgment was entered and, where applicable, comply with  
36 subdivision (c) below. For the sole purpose of determining the amount of rent in arrears  
37 pursuant to a judgment for possession pursuant to G.S. 42-30(iii), the magistrate's  
38 determination shall be based upon (i) the available evidence presented to the magistrate or (ii)  
39 the amounts listed on the face of the filed Complaint in Summary Ejectment. Provided  
40 however, when the magistrate makes a finding in the record, based on evidence presented in  
41 court, that there is an actual dispute as to the amount of rent in arrears that is due and the  
42 magistrate specifies the specific amount of rent in arrears in dispute, in order to stay execution  
43 of a judgment for ejectment, the defendant appellant shall not be required to pay to the clerk of  
44 superior court the amount of rent in arrears found by the magistrate to be in dispute, even if the  
45 magistrate's judgment includes this amount in the amount of rent found to be in arrears. If a  
46 defendant appellant appeared at the hearing before the magistrate and the magistrate found an  
47 amount of rent in arrears that was not in dispute, and if an attorney representing the defendant  
48 appellant on appeal to the district court signs a pleading stating that there is evidence of an  
49 actual dispute as to the amount of rent in arrears, then the defendant appellant shall not be  
50 required to pay the rent in arrears alleged to be in dispute to stay execution of a judgment for  
51 ejectment pending appeal. Any magistrate, clerk, or district court judge shall order stay of

1 execution upon the defendant appellant's paying the undisputed rent in arrears to the clerk and  
2 signing the undertaking. If either party disputes the amount of the payment or the due date in  
3 the undertaking, the aggrieved party may move for modification of the terms of the undertaking  
4 before the clerk of superior court or the district court. Upon such motion and upon notice to all  
5 interested parties, the clerk or court shall hold a hearing within 10 calendar days of the date the  
6 motion is filed and determine what modifications, if any, are appropriate. No writ of possession  
7 or other execution of the magistrate's judgment shall take place during the time the aggrieved  
8 party's motion for modification is pending before the clerk of court."

9       **SECTION 3.** G.S. 42-42(a) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read as  
10 follows:

11 **"§ 42-42. Landlord to provide fit premises.**

12       (a) The landlord shall:

13       ...

14       (8) Within a reasonable period of time based upon the severity of the condition,  
15 repair or remedy any imminently dangerous condition on the premises after  
16 acquiring actual knowledge or receiving notice of the condition.  
17 Notwithstanding the landlord's repair or remedy of any imminently  
18 dangerous condition, the landlord may recover from the tenant the actual and  
19 reasonable costs of repairs that are the fault of the tenant. For purposes of  
20 this subdivision, the term "imminently dangerous condition" means any of  
21 the following:

22       a. Unsafe wiring.

23       b. Unsafe flooring or steps.

24       c. Unsafe ceilings or roofs.

25       d. Unsafe chimneys or flues.

26       e. Lack of potable water.

27       f. Lack of operable locks on all doors leading to the outside.

28       g. Broken windows or lack of operable locks on all windows on the  
29 ground level.

30       h. Lack of operable heating facilities capable of heating living areas to  
31 65 degrees Fahrenheit when it is 20 degrees Fahrenheit outside from  
32 November 1 through March 31.

33       i. Lack of an operable toilet.

34       j. Lack of an operable bathtub or shower.

35       k. Rat infestation as a result of defects in the structure that make the  
36 premises not impervious to rodents.

37       l. Excessive standing water, sewage, or flooding problems caused by  
38 plumbing leaks or inadequate drainage that contribute to mosquito  
39 infestation or mold."

40       **SECTION 4.** G.S. 42-46 reads as rewritten:

41 **"§ 42-46. ~~Late fees.~~ Authorized fees.**

42       (a) In all residential rental agreements in which a definite time for the payment of the  
43 rent is fixed, the parties may agree to a late fee not inconsistent with the provisions of this  
44 subsection, to be chargeable only if any rental payment is five days or more late. If the rent:

45       (1) Is due in monthly installments, a landlord may charge a late fee not to  
46 exceed fifteen dollars (\$15.00) or five percent (5%) of the monthly rent,  
47 whichever is greater.

48       (2) Is due in weekly installments, a landlord may charge a late fee not to exceed  
49 four dollars (\$4.00) or five percent (5%) of the weekly rent, whichever is  
50 greater.

1           ~~(3) Is subsidized by the United States Department of Housing and Urban~~  
2           ~~Development, by the United States Department of Agriculture, by a State~~  
3           ~~agency, by a public housing authority, or by a local government, any late fee~~  
4           ~~shall be calculated in accordance with subdivisions (1) and (2) of this~~  
5           ~~subsection on the tenant's share of the contract rent only, and the rent~~  
6           ~~subsidy shall not be included.~~

7           (b) A late fee under this subsection (a) of this section may be imposed only one time for  
8 each late rental payment. A late fee for a specific late rental payment may not be deducted from  
9 a subsequent rental payment so as to cause the subsequent rental payment to be in default.

10          ~~(e) Any provision of a residential rental agreement contrary to the provisions of this~~  
11          ~~section is against the public policy of this State and therefore void and unenforceable.~~

12          (d) A lessor shall not charge a late fee to a lessee pursuant to subsection (a) of this  
13          section because of the lessee's failure to pay for water or sewer services provided pursuant to  
14          G.S. 62-110(g).

15          ~~(e) Complaint-Filing Fee. – Pursuant to a written lease, a landlord may charge a~~  
16          ~~complaint-filing fee in an amount equal to five percent (5%) of the monthly rent only if the~~  
17          ~~tenant was in default of the lease, the landlord filed and served a complaint for summary~~  
18          ~~ejectment and/or money owed, the tenant cured the default or claim, and the landlord dismissed~~  
19          ~~the complaint prior to judgment. The landlord can include this fee in the amount required to~~  
20          ~~cure the default.~~

21          ~~(f) Court-Appearance Fee. – Pursuant to a written lease, a landlord may charge a court-~~  
22          ~~appearance fee in an amount equal to ten percent (10%) of the monthly rent only if the tenant~~  
23          ~~was in default of the lease; the landlord filed, served, and prosecuted successfully a complaint~~  
24          ~~for summary ejectment and/or monies owed in the small claims court; and neither party~~  
25          ~~appealed the judgment of the magistrate.~~

26          ~~(g) Second Trial Fee. – Pursuant to a written lease, a landlord may charge a second trial~~  
27          ~~fee for a new trial following an appeal from the judgment of a magistrate. To qualify for the~~  
28          ~~fee, the landlord must prove that the tenant was in default of the lease and the landlord~~  
29          ~~prevailed. The landlord's fee may not exceed twelve percent (12%) of the monthly rent in the~~  
30          ~~lease.~~

31          ~~(h) Limitations on Charging and Collection of Fees.~~

32           ~~(1) A landlord who claims fees under subsections (e) through (g) of this section~~  
33           ~~is entitled to charge and retain only one of the above fees for the landlord's~~  
34           ~~complaint for summary ejectment and/or money owed.~~

35           ~~(2) A landlord who earns a fee under subsections (e) through (g) of this section~~  
36           ~~may not deduct payment of that fee from a tenant's subsequent rent payment~~  
37           ~~or declare a failure to pay the fee as a default of the lease for a subsequent~~  
38           ~~summary ejectment action.~~

39           ~~(3) It is contrary to public policy for a landlord to put in a lease or claim any fee~~  
40           ~~for filing a complaint for summary ejectment and/or money owed other than~~  
41           ~~the ones expressly authorized by subsections (e) through (g) of this section,~~  
42           ~~and any such unauthorized fees shall be unenforceable on or after October 1,~~  
43           ~~2009.~~

44           ~~(4) Any provision of a residential rental agreement contrary to the provisions of~~  
45           ~~this section is against the public policy of this State and therefore void and~~  
46           ~~unenforceable. A landlord who collects or attempts to collect a fee in~~  
47           ~~contravention of this section shall be deemed in violation of Article 2 of~~  
48           ~~Chapter 75 of the General Statutes.~~

49           ~~(5) If the rent is subsidized by the United States Department of Housing and~~  
50           ~~Urban Development, by the United States Department of Agriculture, by a~~  
51           ~~State agency, by a public housing authority, or by a local government, any~~

1 fee charged pursuant to this section shall be calculated on the tenant's share  
2 of the contract rent only, and the rent subsidy shall not be included."

3 **SECTION 5.** G.S. 42-52 reads as rewritten:

4 **"§ 42-52. Landlord's obligations.**

5 Upon termination of the ~~tenancy,~~ tenancy and delivery of possession of the premises to the  
6 landlord, money held by the landlord as security may be applied as permitted in G.S. 42-51 or,  
7 if not so applied, shall be refunded to the tenant. In either case the landlord in writing shall  
8 itemize any damage and mail or deliver same to the tenant, together with the balance of the  
9 security deposit, no later than 30 days after termination of the tenancy and delivery of  
10 possession ~~by the tenant,~~ of the premises to the landlord. If the extent of the landlord's claim  
11 against the security deposit cannot be determined within 30 days, the landlord shall provide the  
12 tenant with an interim accounting after 30 days and shall provide a final accounting within 60  
13 days after termination of the tenancy and delivery of possession of the premises to the landlord.  
14 If the tenant's address is unknown the landlord shall apply the deposit as permitted in  
15 G.S. 42-51 after a period of 30 days and the landlord shall hold the balance of the deposit for  
16 collection by the tenant for at least six months. The landlord may not withhold as damages part  
17 of the security deposit for conditions that are due to normal wear and tear nor may the landlord  
18 retain an amount from the security deposit which exceeds his actual damages."

19 **SECTION 6.** G.S. 42-55 reads as rewritten:

20 **"§ 42-55. Remedies.**

21 If the landlord or the landlord's successor in interest fails to account for and refund the  
22 balance of the tenant's security deposit as required by this Article, the tenant may institute a  
23 civil action to require the accounting of and the recovery of the balance of the deposit. The  
24 willful failure of a landlord to comply with the deposit, bond, or notice requirements of this  
25 Article shall void the landlord's right to retain any portion of the tenant's security deposit as  
26 otherwise permitted under G.S. 42-51. In addition to other remedies at law and equity, the  
27 tenant may recover damages resulting from noncompliance by the landlord; and upon a finding  
28 by the court that the party against whom judgment is rendered was in willful noncompliance  
29 with this Article, the court ~~may, in its discretion, allow a reasonable attorney's fee to the duly~~  
30 ~~licensed attorney representing the prevailing party, such attorney's fee to be taxed as part of the~~  
31 ~~cost of court,~~ shall award treble damages as provided in G.S. 75-16, and shall award attorneys'  
32 fees as provided in G.S. 75-16.1."

33 **SECTION 7.** G.S. 160A-443 reads as rewritten:

34 **"§ 160A-443. Ordinance authorized as to repair, closing, and demolition; order of public**  
35 **officer.**

36 Upon the adoption of an ordinance finding that dwelling conditions of the character  
37 described in G.S. 160A-441 exist within a city, the governing body of the city is hereby  
38 authorized to adopt and enforce ordinances relating to dwellings within the city's territorial  
39 jurisdiction that are unfit for human habitation. These ordinances shall include the following  
40 provisions:

41 ...

- 42 (3) That if, after notice and hearing, the public officer determines that the  
43 dwelling under consideration is unfit for human habitation, he shall state in  
44 writing his findings of fact in support of that determination and shall issue  
45 and cause to be served upon the owner thereof an order,
- 46 a. If the repair, alteration or improvement of the dwelling can be made  
47 at a reasonable cost in relation to the value of the dwelling (the  
48 ordinance of the city may fix a certain percentage of this value as  
49 being reasonable), requiring the owner, within the time specified, to  
50 repair, alter or improve the dwelling in order to render it fit for  
51 human ~~habitation or to vacate and close the dwelling as a human~~

1 ~~habitation; or~~habitation. The order may require that the property be  
2 vacated and closed only if continued occupancy during the time  
3 allowed for repair will present a significant threat of bodily harm,  
4 taking into account the nature of the necessary repairs, alterations, or  
5 improvements; the current state of the property; and any additional  
6 risks due to the presence and capacity of minors under the age of 18  
7 or occupants with physical or mental disabilities. The order shall  
8 state that the failure to make timely repairs as directed in the order  
9 shall make the dwelling subject to the issuance of an unfit order  
10 under subdivision (4) of this section; or

11 b. If the repair, alteration or improvement of the dwelling cannot be  
12 made at a reasonable cost in relation to the value of the dwelling (the  
13 ordinance of the city may fix a certain percentage of this value as  
14 being reasonable), or there exists a significant threat of bodily harm  
15 considering the presence and capacity of minors under the age of 18  
16 or occupants with physical or mental disabilities, requiring the  
17 owner, within the time specified in the order, to vacate and close or  
18 remove or demolish such dwelling. However, notwithstanding any  
19 other provision of law, if the dwelling is located in a historic district  
20 of the city and the Historic District Commission determines, after a  
21 public hearing as provided by ordinance, that the dwelling is of  
22 particular significance or value toward maintaining the character of  
23 the district, and the dwelling has not been condemned as unsafe, the  
24 order may require that the dwelling be vacated and closed consistent  
25 with G.S. 160A-400.14(a).

26 (4) That, if the owner fails to comply with an order to repair, alter or improve or  
27 to vacate and close the dwelling, the public officer may cause the dwelling to  
28 be repaired, altered or improved or to be vacated and closed; that the public  
29 officer may cause to be posted on the main entrance of any dwelling so  
30 closed, a placard with the following words: "This building is unfit for human  
31 habitation; the use or occupation of this building for human habitation is  
32 prohibited and unlawful." Occupation of a building so posted shall constitute  
33 a Class 1 misdemeanor. The duties of the public officer set forth in this  
34 subdivision shall not be exercised until the governing body shall have by  
35 ordinance ordered the public officer to proceed to effectuate the purpose of  
36 this Article with respect to the particular property or properties which the  
37 public officer shall have found to be unfit for human habitation and which  
38 property or properties shall be described in the ordinance. This ordinance  
39 shall be recorded in the office of the register of deeds in the county wherein  
40 the property or properties are located and shall be indexed in the name of the  
41 property owner in the grantor index.

42 (5) That, if the owner fails to comply with an order to remove or demolish the  
43 dwelling, the public officer may cause such dwelling to be removed or  
44 demolished. The duties of the public officer set forth in this subdivision  
45 ~~subdivisions (4) and (5)~~ shall not be exercised until the governing body shall  
46 have by ordinance ordered the public officer to proceed to effectuate the  
47 purpose of this Article with respect to the particular property or properties  
48 which the public officer shall have found to be unfit for human habitation  
49 and which property or properties shall be described in the ordinance. No  
50 such ordinance shall be adopted to require demolition of a dwelling until the  
51 owner has first been given a reasonable opportunity to bring it into

1 conformity with the housing code. This ordinance shall be recorded in the  
2 office of the register of deeds in the county wherein the property or  
3 properties are located and shall be indexed in the name of the property  
4 owner in the grantor index.

5 (5a) If the governing body shall have adopted an ~~ordinance~~, ordinance as  
6 provided in subdivision (4) of this section, or the public officer shall have:

7 a. In a municipality located in counties which have a population in  
8 excess of 71,000 by the last federal census (including the entirety of  
9 any municipality located in more than one county at least one county  
10 of which has a population in excess of 71,000), other than  
11 municipalities with a population in excess of 190,000 by the last  
12 federal census, issued an order, ordering a dwelling to be repaired or  
13 vacated and closed, as provided in subdivision (3)a, and if the ~~owner~~  
14 ~~has vacated and closed such dwelling and kept such dwelling~~ has  
15 been vacated and closed for a period of one year pursuant to the  
16 ordinance or order;

17 b. In a municipality with a population in excess of 190,000 by the last  
18 federal census, commenced proceedings under the substandard  
19 housing regulations regarding a dwelling to be repaired or vacated  
20 and closed, as provided in subdivision (3)a., and if the ~~owner has~~  
21 ~~vacated and closed such dwelling and kept such dwelling~~ has been  
22 vacated and closed for a period of one year pursuant to the ordinance  
23 or after such proceedings have commenced,

24 then if the governing body shall find that the owner has abandoned the intent  
25 and purpose to repair, alter or improve the dwelling in order to render it fit  
26 for human habitation and that the continuation of the dwelling in its vacated  
27 and closed status would be inimical to the health, safety, morals and welfare  
28 of the municipality in that the dwelling would continue to deteriorate, would  
29 create a fire and safety hazard, would be a threat to children and vagrants,  
30 would attract persons intent on criminal activities, would cause or contribute  
31 to blight and the deterioration of property values in the area, and would  
32 render unavailable property and a dwelling which might otherwise have been  
33 made available to ease the persistent shortage of decent and affordable  
34 housing in this State, then in such circumstances, the governing body may,  
35 after the expiration of such one year period, enact an ordinance and serve  
36 such ordinance on the owner, setting forth the following:

37 a. If it is determined that the repair of the dwelling to render it fit for  
38 human habitation can be made at a cost not exceeding fifty percent  
39 (50%) of the then current value of the dwelling, the ordinance shall  
40 require that the owner either repair or demolish and remove the  
41 dwelling within 90 days; or

42 b. If it is determined that the repair of the dwelling to render it fit for  
43 human habitation cannot be made at a cost not exceeding fifty  
44 percent (50%) of the then current value of the dwelling, the  
45 ordinance shall require the owner to demolish and remove the  
46 dwelling within 90 days.

47 This ordinance shall be recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds in  
48 the county wherein the property or properties are located and shall be  
49 indexed in the name of the property owner in the grantor index. If the owner  
50 fails to comply with this ordinance, the public officer shall effectuate the  
51 purpose of the ordinance.

1 This subdivision only applies to municipalities located in counties which  
2 have a population in excess of 71,000 by the last federal census (including  
3 the entirety of any municipality located in more than one county at least one  
4 county of which has a population in excess of 71,000).

5 [This subdivision does not apply to the local government units listed in  
6 subdivision (5b) of this section.]

7 (5b) If the governing body shall have adopted an ~~ordinance~~, ordinance as  
8 provided in subdivision (4) of this section, or the public officer shall have:

9 a. In a municipality other than municipalities with a population in  
10 excess of 190,000 by the last federal census, issued an order,  
11 ordering a dwelling to be repaired or vacated and closed, as provided  
12 in subdivision (3)a, and if the ~~owner has vacated and closed such~~  
13 ~~dwelling and kept such dwelling~~ has been vacated and closed for a  
14 period of one year pursuant to the ordinance or order;

15 b. In a municipality with a population in excess of 190,000 by the last  
16 federal census, commenced proceedings under the substandard  
17 housing regulations regarding a dwelling to be repaired or vacated  
18 and closed, as provided in subdivision (3)a., and if the ~~owner has~~  
19 ~~vacated and closed such dwelling and kept such dwelling~~ has been  
20 vacated and closed for a period of one year pursuant to the ordinance  
21 or after such proceedings have commenced,

22 then if the governing body shall find that the owner has abandoned the intent  
23 and purpose to repair, alter or improve the dwelling in order to render it fit  
24 for human habitation and that the continuation of the dwelling in its vacated  
25 and closed status would be inimical to the health, safety, morals and welfare  
26 of the municipality in that the dwelling would continue to deteriorate, would  
27 create a fire and safety hazard, would be a threat to children and vagrants,  
28 would attract persons intent on criminal activities, would cause or contribute  
29 to blight and the deterioration of property values in the area, and would  
30 render unavailable property and a dwelling which might otherwise have been  
31 made available to ease the persistent shortage of decent and affordable  
32 housing in this State, then in such circumstances, the governing body may,  
33 after the expiration of such one year period, enact an ordinance and serve  
34 such ordinance on the owner, setting forth the following:

35 a. If it is determined that the repair of the dwelling to render it fit for  
36 human habitation can be made at a cost not exceeding fifty percent  
37 (50%) of the then current value of the dwelling, the ordinance shall  
38 require that the owner either repair or demolish and remove the  
39 dwelling within 90 days; or

40 b. If it is determined that the repair of the dwelling to render it fit for  
41 human habitation cannot be made at a cost not exceeding fifty  
42 percent (50%) of the then current value of the dwelling, the  
43 ordinance shall require the owner to demolish and remove the  
44 dwelling within 90 days.

45 This ordinance shall be recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds in the  
46 county wherein the property or properties are located and shall be indexed in  
47 the name of the property owner in the grantor index. If the owner fails to  
48 comply with this ordinance, the public officer shall effectuate the purpose of  
49 the ordinance.



1 This subdivision applies to the Cities of Eden, Lumberton, Roanoke  
2 Rapids, and Whiteville, to the municipalities in Lee County, and the Towns  
3 of Bethel, Farmville, Newport, and Waynesville only.

4 (6) Liens. –

5 a. That the amount of the cost of repairs, alterations or improvements,  
6 or vacating and closing, or removal or demolition by the public  
7 officer shall be a lien against the real property upon which the cost  
8 was incurred, which lien shall be filed, have the same priority, and be  
9 collected as the lien for special assessment provided in Article 10 of  
10 this Chapter.

11 b. If the real property upon which the cost was incurred is located in an  
12 incorporated city, then the amount of the cost is also a lien on any  
13 other real property of the owner located within the city limits or  
14 within one mile thereof except for the owner's primary residence.  
15 The additional lien provided in this sub-subdivision is inferior to all  
16 prior liens and shall be collected as a money judgment.

17 c. If the dwelling is removed or demolished by the public officer, he  
18 shall sell the materials of the dwelling, and any personal property,  
19 fixtures or appurtenances found in or attached to the dwelling, and  
20 shall credit the proceeds of the sale against the cost of the removal or  
21 demolition and any balance remaining shall be deposited in the  
22 superior court by the public officer, shall be secured in a manner  
23 directed by the court, and shall be disbursed by the court to the  
24 persons found to be entitled thereto by final order or decree of the  
25 court. Nothing in this section shall be construed to impair or limit in  
26 any way the power of the city to define and declare nuisances and to  
27 cause their removal or abatement by summary proceedings, or  
28 otherwise.

29 (7) If any occupant fails to comply with an order to vacate a dwelling, the public  
30 officer may file a civil action in the name of the city to remove such  
31 occupant. The action to vacate the dwelling shall be in the nature of  
32 summary ejectment and shall be commenced by filing a complaint naming  
33 as parties-defendant any person occupying such dwelling. The clerk of  
34 superior court shall issue a summons requiring the defendant to appear  
35 before a magistrate at a certain time, date and place not to exceed 10 days  
36 from the issuance of the summons to answer the complaint. The summons  
37 and complaint shall be served as provided in G.S. 42-29. The summons shall  
38 be returned according to its tenor, and if on its return it appears to have been  
39 duly served, and if at the hearing the public officer produces a certified copy  
40 of an ordinance adopted by the governing body pursuant to subdivision (5)  
41 authorizing the officer to proceed to vacate the occupied dwelling, the  
42 magistrate shall enter judgment ordering that the premises be vacated and  
43 that all persons be removed. The judgment ordering that the dwelling be  
44 vacated shall be enforced in the same manner as the judgment for summary  
45 ejectment entered under G.S. 42-30. An appeal from any judgment entered  
46 hereunder by the magistrate may be taken as provided in G.S. 7A-228, and  
47 the execution of such judgment may be stayed as provided in G.S. 7A-227.  
48 An action to remove an occupant of a dwelling who is a tenant of the owner  
49 may not be in the nature of a summary ejectment proceeding pursuant to this  
50 paragraph unless such occupant was served with notice at least 30 days  
51 before the filing of the summary ejectment proceeding that the governing

1 body has ordered the public officer to proceed to exercise his duties under  
2 subdivisions (4) and (5) of this section to vacate and close or remove and  
3 demolish the dwelling.

- 4 (8) That whenever a determination is made pursuant to subdivision (3) of this  
5 section that a dwelling must be vacated and closed, or removed or  
6 demolished, under the provisions of this section, notice of the order shall be  
7 given by first-class mail to any organization involved in providing or  
8 restoring dwellings for affordable housing that has filed a written request for  
9 such notices. A minimum period of 45 days from the mailing of such notice  
10 shall be given before removal or demolition by action of the public officer,  
11 to allow the opportunity for any organization to negotiate with the owner to  
12 make repairs, lease, or purchase the property for the purpose of providing  
13 affordable housing. The public officer or clerk shall certify the mailing of  
14 the notices, and the certification shall be conclusive in the absence of fraud.  
15 Only an organization that has filed a written request for such notices may  
16 raise the issue of failure to mail such notices, and the sole remedy shall be an  
17 order requiring the public officer to wait 45 days before causing removal or  
18 demolition."

19 **SECTION 8.** Except as otherwise provided, this act becomes effective October 1,

20 2009.