

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011**

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SENATE BILL 635

Short Title: Littering Offenses/Increase Fines. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Rouzer.

Referred to: Judiciary II.

April 19, 2011

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO INCREASE THE FINES FOR LITTERING OFFENSES.
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 14-399 reads as rewritten:

5 "**§ 14-399. Littering.**

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

13 (1) When the property is designated by the State or political subdivision thereof
14 for the disposal of garbage and refuse, and the person is authorized to use the
15 property for this purpose; or

16 (2) Into a litter receptacle in a manner that the litter will be prevented from
17 being carried away or deposited by the elements upon any part of the private
18 or public property or waters.

19 (a1) No person, including any firm, organization, private corporation, or governing body,
20 agents, or employees of any municipal corporation shall scatter, spill, or place or cause to be
21 blown, scattered, spilled, or placed or otherwise dispose of any litter upon any public property
22 or private property not owned by the person within this State or in the waters of this State
23 including any public highway, public park, lake, river, ocean, beach, campground, forestland,
24 recreational area, trailer park, highway, road, street, or alley except:

25 (1) When the property is designated by the State or political subdivision thereof
26 for the disposal of garbage and refuse, and the person is authorized to use the
27 property for this purpose; or

28 (2) Into a litter receptacle in a manner that the litter will be prevented from
29 being carried away or deposited by the elements upon any part of the private
30 or public property or waters.

31 (a2) Subsection (a1) of this section does not apply to the accidental blowing, scattering,
32 or spilling of an insignificant amount of municipal solid waste, as defined in
33 G.S. 130A-290(18a), during the automated loading of a vehicle designed and constructed to
34 transport municipal solid waste if the vehicle is operated in a reasonable manner and according
35 to manufacturer specifications.

36 (b) When litter is blown, scattered, spilled, thrown or placed from a vehicle or
37 watercraft, the operator thereof shall be presumed to have committed the offense. This



1 presumption, however, does not apply to a vehicle transporting nontoxic and biodegradable
2 agricultural or garden products or supplies, including mulch, tree bark, wood chips, and raw
3 logs.

4 (c) Any person who violates subsection (a) of this section in an amount not exceeding
5 15 pounds and not for commercial purposes is guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor punishable by a
6 fine of not less than ~~two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00)~~ one thousand dollars (\$1,000) nor more
7 than ~~one thousand dollars (\$1,000)~~ four thousand dollars (\$4,000) for the first offense. In
8 addition, the court may require the violator to perform community service of not less than eight
9 hours nor more than 24 hours. The community service required shall be to pick up litter if
10 feasible, and if not feasible, to perform other labor commensurate with the offense committed.
11 Any second or subsequent violation of subsection (a) of this section in an amount not
12 exceeding 15 pounds and not for commercial purposes within three years after the date of a
13 prior violation is a Class 3 misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than ~~five hundred~~
14 ~~dollars (\$500.00)~~ two thousand dollars (\$2,000) nor more than ~~two thousand dollars (\$2,000)~~
15 eight thousand dollars (\$8,000). In addition, the court may require the violator to perform
16 community service of not less than 16 hours nor more than 50 hours. The community service
17 required shall be to pick up litter if feasible, and if not feasible, to perform other labor
18 commensurate with the offense committed.

19 (c1) Any person who violates subsection (a1) of this section in an amount not exceeding
20 15 pounds is guilty of an infraction punishable by a fine of not more than ~~one hundred dollars~~
21 ~~(\$100.00)~~ one thousand dollars (\$1,000). In addition, the court may require the violator to
22 perform community service of not less than four hours nor more than 12 hours. The community
23 service required shall be to pick up litter if feasible, and if not feasible, to perform other labor
24 commensurate with the offense committed. Any second or subsequent violation of subsection
25 (a1) of this section in an amount not exceeding 15 pounds within three years after the date of a
26 prior violation is an infraction punishable by a fine of not more than ~~two hundred dollars~~
27 ~~(\$200.00)~~ two thousand dollars (\$2,000). In addition, the court may require the violator to
28 perform community service of not less than eight hours nor more than 24 hours. The
29 community service required shall be to pick up litter if feasible, and if not feasible, to perform
30 other labor commensurate with the offense committed. For purposes of this subsection, the
31 term "litter" shall not include nontoxic and biodegradable agricultural or garden products or
32 supplies, including mulch, tree bark, and wood chips.

33 (d) Any person who violates subsection (a) of this section in an amount exceeding 15
34 pounds but not exceeding 500 pounds and not for commercial purposes is guilty of a Class 3
35 misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than ~~five hundred dollars (\$500.00)~~ two thousand
36 dollars (\$2,000) nor more than ~~two thousand dollars (\$2,000)~~ eight thousand dollars (\$8,000).
37 In addition, the court shall require the violator to perform community service of not less than
38 24 hours nor more than 100 hours. The community service required shall be to pick up litter if
39 feasible, and if not feasible, to perform other community service commensurate with the
40 offense committed.

41 (d1) Any person who violates subsection (a1) of this section in an amount exceeding 15
42 pounds but not exceeding 500 pounds is guilty of an infraction punishable by a fine of not more
43 than ~~two hundred dollars (\$200.00)~~ two thousand dollars (\$2,000). In addition, the court may
44 require the violator to perform community service of not less than eight hours nor more than 24
45 hours. The community service required shall be to pick up litter if feasible, and if not feasible,
46 to perform other labor commensurate with the offense committed.

47 (e) Any person who violates subsection (a) of this section in an amount exceeding 500
48 pounds or in any quantity for commercial purposes, or who discards litter that is a hazardous
49 waste as defined in G.S. 130A-290 is guilty of a Class I felony.

50 (e1) Any person who violates subsection (a1) of this section in an amount exceeding 500
51 pounds is guilty of an infraction punishable by a fine of not more than ~~three hundred dollars~~

1 ~~(\$300.00)~~ three thousand dollars (\$3,000). In addition, the court may require the violator to
2 perform community service of not less than 16 hours nor more than 50 hours. The community
3 service required shall be to pick up litter if feasible, and if not feasible, to perform other labor
4 commensurate with the offense committed.

5 (e2) If any person violates subsection (a) or (a1) of this section in an amount exceeding
6 15 pounds or in any quantity for commercial purposes, or discards litter that is a hazardous
7 waste as defined in G.S. 130A-290, the court shall order the violator to:

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

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

16 (f1) If a violation of subsection (a) of this section involves the operation of a motor
17 vehicle, upon a finding of guilt, the court shall forward a record of the finding to the
18 Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles, which shall record a penalty of one
19 point on the violator's drivers license pursuant to the point system established by G.S. 20-16.
20 There shall be no insurance premium surcharge or assessment of points under the classification
21 plan adopted under G.S. 58-36-65 for a finding of guilt under this section.

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

25 (h) If a person sustains damages arising out of a violation of subsection (a) of this
26 section that is punishable as a felony, a court, in a civil action for the damages, shall order the
27 person to pay the injured party threefold the actual damages or ~~two hundred dollars~~
28 ~~(\$200.00)~~ one thousand dollars (\$1,000), whichever amount is greater. In addition, the court
29 shall order the person to pay the injured party's court costs and attorney's fees.

30 (i) For the purpose of the section, unless the context requires otherwise:

- 31 (1) "Aircraft" means a motor vehicle or other vehicle that is used or designed to
32 fly, but does not include a parachute or any other device used primarily as
33 safety equipment.
- 34 (2) Repealed by Session Laws 1999-454, s. 1.
- 35 (2a) "Commercial purposes" means litter discarded by a business, corporation,
36 association, partnership, sole proprietorship, or any other entity conducting
37 business for economic gain, or by an employee or agent of the entity.
- 38 (3) "Law enforcement officer" means any law enforcement officer sworn and
39 certified pursuant to Chapter 17C or 17E of the General Statutes, except
40 company police officers as defined in G.S. 74E-6(b)(3). In addition, and
41 solely for the purposes of this section, "law enforcement officer" means any
42 employee of a county or municipality designated by the county or
43 municipality as a litter enforcement officer.
- 44 (4) "Litter" means any garbage, rubbish, trash, refuse, can, bottle, box,
45 container, wrapper, paper, paper product, tire, appliance, mechanical
46 equipment or part, building or construction material, tool, machinery, wood,
47 motor vehicle or motor vehicle part, vessel, aircraft, farm machinery or
48 equipment, sludge from a waste treatment facility, water supply treatment
49 plant, or air pollution control facility, dead animal, or discarded material in
50 any form resulting from domestic, industrial, commercial, mining,
51 agricultural, or governmental operations. While being used for or distributed

1 in accordance with their intended uses, "litter" does not include political
2 pamphlets, handbills, religious tracts, newspapers, and other similar printed
3 materials the unsolicited distribution of which is protected by the
4 Constitution of the United States or the Constitution of North Carolina.

5 (5) "Vehicle" has the same meaning as in G.S. 20-4.01(49).

6 (6) "Watercraft" means any boat or vessel used for transportation across the
7 water.

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

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

12 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2011, and applies to
13 offenses committed on or after that date.