

Fracking Bill Gets Thumbs Up From Senate, Heads To House

By Administrator

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RALEIGH, (AP) — Legislation that would officially end North Carolina's moratorium on fracking next summer has cleared the state Senate after some additional changes that backers say will improve safety and any potential cleanup.

The Senate voted 35-12 Thursday for the measure that seeks to move the regulatory process for hydraulic fracturing toward its conclusion. The legislation says permits could be issued starting July 1, 2015. A state commission already has drafted regulations to govern the industry, but critics say they aren't good enough and more work is needed. Senators agreed to amendments setting minimum bonding requirements for drillers and reducing the penalty for the unauthorized disclosure of chemicals used by companies in the fracking process. The previous proposed felony is now a misdemeanor.

The measure heads next to the House.