

**§ 159B-34. Liability and defense.**

(a) No commissioner or officer of any joint agency or municipality, or member of an executive committee created pursuant to G.S. 159B-10, or person or persons acting in their behalf, while acting within the scope of their authority, shall be subject to any personal liability or accountability by reason of his carrying out any of the powers expressly or impliedly given in this Chapter.

(b) The governing board of a joint agency may provide for the defense of a criminal or civil proceeding brought against any current or former commissioner, member of an executive committee, officer, agent or employee either in his official or individual capacity, or both, on account of any act done or omission made in the scope and course of his employment or duty as a commissioner, member of an executive committee, officer, agent, or employee of the joint agency. The defense may be provided by the agency by its own counsel, by employing other counsel or by purchasing insurance which requires that the insurer provide the defense.

(c) The governing board may appropriate funds for the purpose of paying all or part of a claim made or any civil judgment entered against any of its current or former commissioners, members of executive committees, officers, agents or employees, when such claim is made or such judgment is rendered as damages on account of any act done or omission made in the scope and course of his current or former employment or duty as a commissioner, member of an executive committee, officer, agent or employee; provided, however, that nothing in this section shall authorize any joint agency to appropriate funds for the purpose of paying any claim made or civil judgment entered against any current or former commissioners, members of executive committees, officers, agents or employees if the board of commissioners finds that commissioner, member of an executive committee, officer, agent or employee acted or failed to act because of actual fraud, corruption or actual malice on his part. Any joint agency may purchase insurance coverage for payment of claims or judgments pursuant to this section. (1975, c. 186, s. 1; 1985, c. 225, s. 1; 1995, c. 412, s. 20.)