

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
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HOUSE DRH80056-MN-8E* (01/27)

Short Title: Customer Srvc., Econ. Dev., and Transport'n. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Moffitt, Howard, Collins, and Murry (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH UNIFORM GEOGRAPHICAL ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS
3 FOR THE STATE, TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION AND
4 ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO TAKE ACTION TO ALIGN
5 THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS WITH THESE UNIFORM REGIONS, AND TO
6 CREATE THE COMMISSION ON REGIONALIZATION CONFORMITY TO
7 DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS ON CONFORMING (I) THE EXISTING
8 REGIONAL DIVISIONS OF THE SEVEN REGIONAL COMMISSIONS AND
9 PARTNERSHIPS TO THE UNIFORM DIVISIONS AND (II) TO DEVELOP A
10 SCHEDULE FOR STUDYING THE REGIONAL DIVISIONS OF OTHER STATE
11 AGENCIES THAT HAVE REGIONAL OFFICES.

12 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

13
14 **PART I. CREATION OF UNIFORM REGIONAL DIVISIONS.**

15 **SECTION 1.(a)** Intent to Create Uniform Regional Divisions. – It is the intent of
16 the General Assembly to establish geographically uniform administrative regions in this State
17 for State agencies that have regional offices and, to the extent feasible, to consolidate regional
18 offices and to establish a one-stop source in each region for citizens and businesses seeking
19 State services at a regional office.

20 **SECTION 1.(b)** Article 1 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes is amended by
21 adding a new section to read:

22 **"§ 143B-28.1. Uniform regional administrative divisions.**

23 For purposes of regionalization conformity, the State is hereby divided into seven regions
24 as follows:

- 25 (1) Region I, consisting of Buncombe, Burke, Cherokee, Clay, Graham,
26 Heywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell,
27 Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, and Yancey Counties.
28 (2) Region II, consisting of Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Caldwell,
29 Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes, and
30 Yadkin Counties.
31 (3) Region III, consisting of Alamance, Caswell, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth,
32 Guilford, Orange, Rockingham, Rowan, and Stokes Counties.
33 (4) Region IV, consisting of Anson, Cabarrus, Chatham, Hoke, Lee,
34 Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph, Richmond, Scotland, Stanly,
35 and Union Counties.



- 1 (5) Region V, consisting of Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Halifax,
2 Johnston, Nash, Person, Vance, Wake, Warren, Wayne, and Wilson
3 Counties.
4 (6) Region VI, consisting of Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Cumberland,
5 Duplin, Harnett, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender, Robeson, and Sampson
6 Counties.
7 (7) Region VII, consisting of Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Carteret, Chowan,
8 Craven, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Greene, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir,
9 Martin, Northampton, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrell, and
10 Washington Counties."

11 **SECTION 1.(c)** This Part becomes effective July 1, 2013.

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13 **PART II. IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIFORM REGIONAL DIVISIONS IN**
14 **PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION**
15 **AND ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES.**

16 **SECTION 2.(a)** DOT and DENR to Develop Plan to Implement Uniform Regions
17 and to Establish One-Stop Services. – The Department of Transportation and the Department of
18 Environment and Natural Resources shall, in cooperation with each other, develop a plan to
19 align their administrative regions with the regions set out in G.S. 143B-28.1, as enacted by
20 Section 1 of this act. The plan shall include the following:

- 21 (1) Establishment of regional offices that are either shared or in the same
22 location.
23 (2) Steps necessary to create efficient, economical, and user-friendly one-stop
24 regional services for citizens and businesses. These may include shared
25 frontline staff, staff cross-trained in the basic requirements for permits issued
26 by both department, or a combination; consolidation of programs or services
27 and identification of any statutory or other legal impediments.
28 (3) Identification of equipment and support services that may be efficiently and
29 economically shared at shared regional facilities.
30 (4) Identification of any savings or additional costs reasonably likely to result
31 from the requirements of this section.
32 (5) A time line for completion of the plan.

33 **SECTION 2.(b)** Implementation of Plan and Reports. – The Departments of
34 Transportation and Environment and Natural Resources shall jointly report on the plan
35 developed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section to the Chairs of the House Appropriations
36 Committee and the Cochairs of the Senate Appropriations/Base Budget Committee no later
37 than June 1, 2013. The Departments of Transportation and Environment and Natural Resources
38 shall begin implementation of the plan no later than July 1, 2013, and shall provide quarterly
39 reports on its implementation by October 1, 2013, January 1, 2014, and April 1, 2014, and more
40 frequently, if requested, to the Study Commission on Regionalization Conformity created in
41 Section 4 of this act and to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee and the
42 Environmental Review Commission.

43 **SECTION 2.(c)** The Department of Transportation and the Department of
44 Environment and Natural Resources shall use funds available to carry out the requirements of
45 this section.

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47 **PART III. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE TO STUDY REGIONAL ECONOMIC**
48 **DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS.**

49 **SECTION 3.(a)** Department of Commerce Recommendations. – The Department
50 of Commerce shall study and make recommendations on:

1 (1) How the four regional economic development commissions created in
2 Chapter 158 of the General Statutes (the Western North Carolina Regional
3 Economic Development Commission (AdvantageWest), North Carolina's
4 Northeast Commission, the Southeastern North Carolina Regional Economic
5 Development Commission, and North Carolina's Eastern Region
6 Development Commission) and the three regional economic development
7 partnerships (the Charlotte Regional Partnership, Inc., the Piedmont Triad
8 Regional partnership, and the Research Triangle Regional Partnership) may
9 be most efficiently and economically aligned with the regions set out in
10 G.S. 143B-28.1, as enacted by Section 1 of this act, and what action is
11 needed to implement the recommended changes, including any necessary
12 legislation.

13 (2) Ways the programs and activities of the four regional economic development
14 commissions and the three regional economic development partnerships can
15 be best coordinated with those of the Department of Commerce and with
16 other State agencies to create one-stop regional services for citizens and
17 businesses.

18 In developing its recommendations, the Department shall consult with the four
19 commissions and three partnerships. The Department shall also identify any savings or
20 additional costs likely to result from the realignment of the commissions and partnerships,
21 including any possibilities for them to leverage private funding whenever possible.

22 **SECTION 3.(b)** Report; Funds. – The Department of Commerce shall report its
23 recommendations to the Study Commission on Regionalization Conformity created in Section
24 4 of this act no later than September 1, 2013. The Department shall use funds otherwise
25 available to conduct the study.

26 **PART IV. STUDY COMMISSION ON REGIONALIZATION CONFORMITY.**

27 **SECTION 4.1.(a)** Creation of Commission. – The Study Commission on
28 Regionalization Conformity is established in the General Assembly.

29 **SECTION 4.1.(b)** Membership. – The Study Commission on Regionalization
30 Conformity shall consist of eight members, four members of the Senate appointed by the
31 President Pro Tempore of the Senate and four members of the House of Representatives
32 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

33 **SECTION 4.1.(c)** Cochairs; Vacancies; Quorum. – The Study Commission on
34 Regionalization Conformity shall have two cochairs, one designated by the President Pro
35 Tempore of the Senate and one designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives
36 from among their respective appointees. The Commission shall meet upon the call of the
37 cochairs. Any vacancy on the Commission shall be filled by the original appointing authority.
38 A majority of the members of the Commission constitutes a quorum.

39 **SECTION 4.1.(d)** Compensation; Administration. – Members of the Study
40 Commission on Regionalization Conformity shall receive per diem, subsistence, and travel
41 allowances in accordance with G.S. 120-3.1. The Commission, while in the discharge of its
42 official duties, may exercise all powers provided for under G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.1
43 through G.S. 120-19.4. The Commission may meet in the Legislative Building or the
44 Legislative Office Building.

45 With approval of the Legislative Services Commission, the Legislative Services
46 Officer shall assign professional staff to assist the Study Commission on Regionalization
47 Conformity in its work. The House of Representatives' and the Senate's Directors of Legislative
48 Assistants shall assign clerical staff to the Study Commission on Regionalization Conformity,
49 and the expenses relating to the clerical employees shall be borne by the Commission. The
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1 Study Commission on Regionalization Conformity may contract for professional, clerical, or
2 consultant services, as provided by G.S. 120-32.02.

3 **SECTION 4.2.(a)** Duties. – The Study Commission on Regionalization
4 Conformity shall review the recommendations submitted by the Department of Commerce
5 pursuant to Section 3 of this act and any other information the Commission deems relevant.
6 After conducting its review, the Commission shall recommend to the 2014 Regular Session of
7 the 2013 General Assembly a plan for aligning the seven regional commissions and
8 partnerships with the regions set out in G.S. 143B-28.1 as enacted by Section 1 of this act. The
9 recommendations shall include requiring local commerce entities to leverage private funding
10 whenever possible, a proposed time line for implementation, and any required legislation,
11 including conforming amendments. The report containing the recommendations shall identify
12 any savings or costs identified by the Commission as likely to result from its recommendations.

13 **SECTION 4.2.(b)** Additional Study. – The Study Commission on Regionalization
14 Conformity may also:

- 15 (1) After reviewing the quarterly reports submitted jointly by the Departments
16 of Transportation and Environment and Natural Resources pursuant to
17 Section 2 of this act and any other information the Commission deems
18 relevant, recommend additional legislation, including conforming statutory
19 amendments, that may be necessary to complete the implementation of the
20 plan developed by the Departments pursuant to Section 2 of this act.
- 21 (2) Identify other State departments, agencies, boards, and commissions with
22 regional offices that should be aligned with the uniform regional divisions
23 established in G.S. 143B-28.1, as enacted by Section 1 of this act, and a
24 proposed schedule for studying how to best align them.
- 25 (3) Study and identify whether there are (i) opportunities for citizens and
26 businesses seeking services from State departments and agencies, especially
27 in connection with permitting, or (ii) activities performed by State
28 Departments and agencies at regional offices that could be better done by
29 that entity's office in Raleigh, through the Internet or other means, or that
30 could be better done at the county or local level.

31 **SECTION 4.2.(c)** Report. – The Study Commission on Regionalization
32 Conformity shall report its recommendations under this section to the 2014 Regular Session of
33 the 2013 General Assembly.

34 **SECTION 4.2.(d)** Agency Cooperation. – All State departments and agencies and
35 local governments and their subdivisions shall furnish the Study Commission on
36 Regionalization Conformity with any information in their possession or available to them.

37 **SECTION 4.2.(e)** Commission Termination. – The Study Commission on
38 Regionalization Conformity shall terminate on the filing of its report.

39 **PART V. EFFECTIVE DATE AND CONSTRUCTION.**

40 **SECTION 5.(a)** Nothing in this act shall be construed to obligate the General
41 Assembly to appropriate funds to implement this act.

42 **SECTION 5.(b)** Except as otherwise provided in this act, this act is effective when
43 it becomes law.
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