

Article 9.  
Land Policy Act.

**§ 113A-150. Short title.**

This Article shall be known as the Land Policy Act of 1974. (1973, c. 1306, s. 1.)

**§ 113A-151. Findings, intent and purpose.**

(a) Findings. – The General Assembly hereby finds that:

- (1) The land of North Carolina is a resource basic to the welfare of her people.
- (2) A lack of coordination of governmental action; a lack of clearly stated, sound, and widely understood guidelines for planning; and a lack of systematic collection, classification, and utilization of information regarding the land resource have led to inconsistencies in policy and inadequacies in planning for the present and future uses of the land resource.
- (3) Governmental agencies responsible for controlling land use and private and public users of the land resource are often unable to independently develop guidelines for land-use practices which provide adequate and meaningful provision for future demands on the land resource, while allowing current needs to be met.
- (4) Systematic and sound decisions as to the location and nature of major public investments in key facilities cannot be made without a comprehensive State policy regarding the land resource.
- (5) Those affected by State land-use policy and decisions must be given an opportunity for full participation in the policy-and decision-making process. Such a process must allow for the final implementation of policy by local governments. The State should take whatever steps necessary to encourage and assist local governments in meeting their obligation to control current uses and plan for future uses of the land resource.

(b) Intent and Purpose. – The General Assembly declares that it is the intent of this Article to undertake the continuing development and implementation of a State land-use policy, incorporating environmental, esthetic, economic, social, and other factors so as to promote the public interest, to preserve and enhance environmental quality, to protect areas of natural beauty and historic sites, to encourage beneficial economic development, and to protect and promote the public health, safety, and welfare. Such policy shall serve as a guide for decision-making in State and federally assisted programs which affect land use, and shall provide a framework for the development of land-use policies and programs by local governments. It is the purpose of this Article to:

- (1) Promote patterns of land use which are in accord with a State land-use policy which encourages the wise and balanced use of the State's resources;
- (2) Establish a State policy to give local governments guidance and assistance in the establishment and implementation of local land planning and management programs so as to effectively meet their responsibilities for economically and environmentally sound land-use management;
- (3) Establish a State land-use policy which seeks to provide essential public services equitably to all persons within the State and to assure that citizens shall have, consistent with sound principles of land resource use, maximum freedom

- and opportunity to live and conduct their activities in locations of their personal choice;
- (4) Condition the distribution of certain federal and State funds on meeting reasonable and flexible State requirements for basic land planning; such conditions to include a clear statement of the State's authority and responsibility for review of planning and management by local governments;
  - (5) Develop and maintain coordination of all State programs having a land-use impact, including joint planning and management of State lands with adjacent nonstate lands, so as to ensure consistency with the purposes of this Article;
  - (6) Promote the development of systematic methods for the exchange of land-use, environmental, economic, and social information among all levels of government, and among agencies at all levels of government. (1973, c. 1306, s. 1.)

**§ 113A-152. Definitions.**

Unless the context otherwise requires, the following terms as used in this Article are defined as follows:

- (1) "Areas of environmental concern" means: those areas of this State where uncontrolled development, unregulated use, or other man-related activities could result in major or irreversible damage to important environmental, historic, cultural, scientific or scenic values, or natural systems or processes which are of more than local significance, or could unreasonably endanger life or property as a result of natural hazards, or could result in loss of continued long-range productivity in renewable resource areas.
- (2) "Principal officer" means the duly appointed or elected public official in responsible charge of a principal department of State government.
- (3) "Key facilities" means public facilities which tend to induce development and urbanization of more than local impact and includes, but is not limited to, major facilities for the development, generation, and transmission of energy, for communication, and for transportation.
- (4) "Local government" means any county, incorporated village, town, or city, or any combination of counties, incorporated villages, towns, and cities, acting through a joint program pursuant to the provisions of this Article.
- (5) "New communities and large-scale developments" means private development which, because of its magnitude or the magnitude of its effect on the surrounding environment, is likely to present issues of more than local significance.
- (6) "Project of regional impact" means land use, public development, and private development on government or nongovernmental lands for which there is a demonstrable impact affecting the interests of constituents of more than one local unit of government.
- (7) "Region" or "regional" means or refers to one or more of the official planning regions established pursuant to the laws of this State. (1973, c. 1306, s. 1.)

**§ 113A-153:** Repealed by Session Laws 2015-264, s. 15, effective October 1, 2015.

**§ 113A-154. Repealed by Session Laws 1981, c. 881, s. 3.**

**§ 113A-155. State land policy.**

- (a) Content. – The State land policy of North Carolina shall consist of the following:
- (1) Consistent, comprehensive, and coordinated principles, guidelines, and methods for the transaction of all matters and affairs by any agency of State or local government dealing with, or related to, the acquisition, ownership, use, management, and disposition, in part or whole, of title or interests in state-owned and other public lands;
  - (2) A compilation of all appropriate State laws, appellate court decisions, and current administrative practices, policies and principles, as established by precedent or administrative order, when accepted and recognized as such by the Land Policy Council; and
  - (3) Principles, guidelines and methods regarding specific land-use and management problems identified by the Land Policy Council, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
    - a. Specific policies and principles for early acquisition of a reserve of lands to form a resource base from which needs for parklands, recreation sites, water reservoirs, key facilities, and other public needs may be met.
    - b. Specific policies and principles for the location, coordination, consolidation and joint use of utility rights-of-way, of whatever sort, whether above, below, or on the surface of the ground.
    - c. Specific policies regarding large-scale and special public projects and assemblage of land therefor.
    - d. Specific policies for determination and certification of areas of environmental concern.
    - e. Specific policies regarding new communities and large-scale developments on nongovernment lands.
    - f. Specific policies regarding projects of regional impact.
    - g. Other similar and related policies and directives as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of this Article.

(b) Effect. – Such policies, principles, directives and methods, when not inconsistent or in conflict with existing law or rules, shall guide and determine the administrative procedures, findings, decisions and objectives of all agencies of State and local government with regard to acquisition, management, and disposition of public lands and interests therein and the regulation of private lands involved in or affected by areas of environmental concern, new communities, large-scale developments and projects of regional impact.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 827, s. 147. (1973, c. 1306, s. 1; 1987, c. 827, s. 147.)

**§ 113A-156. State land classification system.**

(a) Purpose. – Within two years following July 1, 1974, the North Carolina Land Policy Council shall develop a State land classification system, which shall include comprehensive guidelines and policies and a method for the classification of all lands in the State for the purposes of:

- (1) Providing to State and local governmental agencies a system for achieving the stated purposes of this Article.
- (2) Promoting the orderly growth and development of the State in a manner consistent with the wise use and conservation of the land resources.
- (3) Assuring that the use and development of land in areas of environmental concern within the State is not inconsistent with the State land policy.
- (4) Assuring that the use of land for key facilities, new communities, and large-scale developments, or in areas which are or may be impacted by key facilities, new communities, and large-scale developments, is not inconsistent with the State land policy.

(b) **Criteria for Classification.** – The Council shall develop and adopt as a part of the classification system no fewer than four nor more than eight classifications which recognize all lands as a basic social and natural resource and which provide for the full range of private and public purposes in the use and conservation of the land resource. Emphasis shall be given to a harmonious relationship among the use potentials of the land, the physical and fiscal feasibility of providing necessary public services, and other facilities and social services. Areas of environmental concern, key facilities, projects of regional impact, new communities, and large-scale developments shall be recognized and made a part of the land classification system in order to further the stated purposes of this Article.

(c) **Basis for Land Classification.** – Full consideration shall be given, but shall not be limited to, the following aspects and characteristics of the lands of the State:

- (1) Topographic features such as land elevations and gradients.
- (2) Surface and underground waters, natural or artificial.
- (3) Geological, chemical, mineral and physical characteristics of the land.
- (4) The existing or potential utility of lands and sites having intrinsic historic, ecological, recreational, scenic or esthetic values or virtues.
- (5) The availability or potential availability of public services, including key facilities, health, education, and other community facilities and social services.
- (6) Areas of environmental concern, existing or potential key facilities, projects of regional impact, new communities, and large-scale development.

(d) **Content.** – The State land classification system shall include, but specifically is not limited to, the following:

- (1) Concise and explicit descriptions of each of the classification categories.
- (2) Guidelines and procedures for the preparation of official land-use plans by the land-planning agencies of local government, including a procedure for review by an appropriate State agency for sufficiency and consistency with the provisions of this Article, and a procedure for assembling local plans into regional plans.
- (3) Rules and procedures for land reclassification together with an appellate procedure for property owners and other affected individuals, including officers of any level of government.

(e) Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 827, s. 148. (1973, c. 1306, s. 1; 1987, c. 827, s. 148.)

**§ 113A-157. Repealed by Session Laws 1981, c. 881, s. 3.**

**§ 113A-158. Protection of rights.**

Nothing in this Article authorizes any governmental agency to adopt a rule or issue any order that constitutes a taking of property in violation of the Constitution of this State or of the United States, without payment of full compensation. (1973, c. 1306, s. 5; 1987, c. 827, s. 144.)

**§ 113A-159. Interpretation.**

It is the intention of the General Assembly that this Article be interpreted consistently with, and administered in coordination with, the Coastal Area Management Act of 1974. (1973, c. 1306, s. 6.)

**§§ 113A-160 through 113A-164. Reserved for future codification purposes.**