

§ 147-69.6. Swain County Settlement Trust Fund.

(a) The Swain County Settlement Trust Fund is established as a special fund in the Office of the State Treasurer under the management of the Treasurer. The Fund shall consist of the proceeds of any payments made by the United States in settlement of the 1943 agreement between Swain County and the United States Department of Interior, such other contributions as Swain County or other entities may choose to make to the Fund, and the interest and other investment income earned by the Fund. For the purposes of this section, the initial balance of the Fund shall be defined as fifty-two million dollars (\$52,000,000).

(a1) Contributions to the Fund are irrevocable. Assets in the Fund may be disbursed only to Swain County.

(b) The State Treasurer shall disburse to Swain County amounts requested by the Swain County Board of Commissioners pursuant to a majority vote of that body, provided that disbursements to Swain County under this subsection shall not be made from the initial balance of the Fund. Disbursements made pursuant to this subsection shall occur no more frequently than once per quarter.

(c) No portion of the initial balance of the Fund may be disbursed to Swain County absent a request by the Swain County Board of Commissioners accompanied by a certification by the Swain County Board of Elections that two-thirds of the registered voters of Swain County voted in favor of the disbursement and subsequent expenditure of the amount requested in a referendum conducted under subsection (f) of this section.

(d) Funds disbursed to Swain County under subsections (b) or (c) of this section shall be managed by the county in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act, as amended.

(e) No part of the initial balance of the Swain County Settlement Trust Fund or of any interest or other income earned on that initial balance may be paid to or received by any agent or attorney on account of services rendered in connection with negotiating the settlement agreement between Swain County and the United States Department of Interior or obtaining the monetary settlement from the United States.

(f) The Board of Commissioners of Swain County may direct the Swain County Board of Elections to conduct an advisory referendum on the question of whether any portion of the initial balance of the Fund should be disbursed to and expended by the county for a particular purpose. The election shall be held in accordance with the procedures of G.S. 163-287. The question to be presented on the ballot shall disclose the specific purpose proposed for expenditure of the initial balance of the Trust Fund and the amount proposed for expenditure.

(g) The Swain County Settlement Trust Fund is subject to the oversight of the State Auditor pursuant to Article 5A of Chapter 147 of the General Statutes.

(h) The Swain County Settlement Trust Fund and the income therefrom shall not take the place of or be counted against any other State appropriations or program providing funds or disbursements to Swain County. (2008-13, s. 3; 2013-381, s. 10.22; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, ss. 3.1(a), (b), 6.1; 2019-133, s. 1.)