

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013

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HOUSE BILL 830

Short Title: Adopt State Symbols. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Avila, Martin, McElraft, and West (Primary Sponsors).

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Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

April 11, 2013

1 **A BILL TO BE ENTITLED**

2 AN ACT TO ADOPT AN OFFICIAL STATE FOSSIL, FROG, SALAMANDER,
3 MARSUPIAL, AND FOLK ART.

4 Whereas, some of North Carolina's official State symbols have been suggested by
5 the State's school children after they have had history, science, social studies, or geography
6 lessons related to North Carolina; and

7 Whereas, this year some of the suggestions range from the adoption of an official
8 fossil to an official frog; and

9 Whereas, the State of North Carolina has a number of unique official symbols but
10 does not have an official fossil, frog, salamander, marsupial, or folk art; and

11 Whereas, the megalodon shark is an extinct shark species that lived over 1.5 million
12 years ago; and

13 Whereas, the megalodon shark may have reached over 40 feet in length and
14 weighed up to 100 tons; and

15 Whereas, the megalodon shark had serrated, heart-shaped teeth that may have
16 grown to over seven inches in length; and

17 Whereas, fossilized teeth of the megalodon shark have been found in North Carolina
18 and throughout the world; and

19 Whereas, North Carolina and the Southeast region of the United States lead the
20 world in amphibian diversity; and

21 Whereas, the pine barrens tree frog can be found in the Sandhills and Coastal Plain
22 regions of North Carolina; and

23 Whereas, the pine barrens tree frog has been considered one of the most striking and
24 beautiful frogs in the Southeast region of the United States; and

25 Whereas, the pine barrens tree frog by name reflects one of North Carolina's
26 signature trees and ecosystems that have been a vital part of the State's economic, cultural, and
27 natural history since colonial times; and

28 Whereas, North Carolina also leads the nation and world in salamander diversity,
29 most notably in our Appalachian Mountains; and

30 Whereas, the marbled salamander is found throughout the State and is unique in that
31 it is a charismatic, striking, chunky-bodied, fossorial amphibian, of which no two are exactly
32 alike in color pattern; and



1 Whereas, according the North Carolina Wildlife Commission's 2005 North Carolina
2 Wildlife Action Plan, the pine barrens tree frog and the marbled salamander have been
3 identified as priority species for population monitoring and conservation in North Carolina; and

4 Whereas, the Virginia opossum is native to North Carolina and is the only marsupial
5 found in North America; the female carries its underdeveloped young in a pouch until they are
6 capable of living independently, similar to a kangaroo; and

7 Whereas, the Virginia opossum is one of the oldest and most primitive species of
8 mammal found in North America; and

9 Whereas, the opossum is about the size of a large house cat with a triangular head; a
10 long pointed nose; dark eyes; a long, scaly, prehensile tail; and short, black, leathery ears; and

11 Whereas, the Virginia opossum is nocturnal and lives in a wide variety of habitats,
12 including deciduous forests, open woods, and farmland but prefers wet areas such as marshes,
13 swamps, and streams; and

14 Whereas, at age 65, Vollis Simpson, a self-taught folk artist, began making giant
15 windmills known as "whirligigs" at his home in Wilson, North Carolina; and

16 Whereas, Mr. Simpson's whirligigs have been exhibited at the North Carolina
17 Museum of Art in Raleigh, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia, and the Visionary Art
18 Museum in Baltimore, Maryland, and at other locations, including New York, California,
19 Canada, and England; and

20 Whereas, Mr. Simpson and details of his artwork have been featured in many
21 national magazines and in several books; and

22 Whereas, the City of Wilson is developing the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park to
23 display a large collection of these whirligigs in historic downtown, which will be a
24 one-of-a-kind destination for visitors; Now, therefore,

25 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

26 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 145 of the General Statutes is amended by adding the
27 following new sections to read:

28 **"§ 145-41. State fossil."**

29 The fossilized teeth of the megalodon shark is adopted as the official fossil of the State of
30 North Carolina.

31 **"§ 145-42. State frog."**

32 The pine barrens tree frog (*Hyla andersonii*) is adopted as the official frog of the State of
33 North Carolina.

34 **"§ 145-43. State salamander."**

35 The marbled salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*) is adopted as the official salamander of the
36 State of North Carolina.

37 **"§ 145-44. State marsupial."**

38 The Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*) is adopted as the official marsupial of the
39 State of North Carolina.

40 **"§ 145-45. State folk art."**

41 The whirligigs created by Vollis Simpson are adopted as the official folk art of the State of
42 North Carolina."

43 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.