

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2013

S

2

SENATE BILL 127  
Commerce Committee Substitute Adopted 5/8/13

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

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 25, 2013

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH GEOGRAPHICALLY UNIFORM ZONES TO PROMOTE COLLABORATION FOR PROSPERITY WITHIN THIS STATE, TO REPEAL THE STATUTES RELATING TO THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONS AND TO TRANSFER THEIR FUNCTIONS WITHIN EACH ZONE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES, AND TRANSPORTATION AND THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM TO MAINTAIN LIAISON PERSONNEL WITHIN EACH ZONE, AND TO CREATE THE STUDY COMMISSION ON INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION FOR PROSPERITY.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**PART I. CREATION OF COLLABORATION FOR PROSPERITY ZONES**

**SECTION 1.(a)** Intent to Create Collaboration for Prosperity Zones. – It is the intent of the General Assembly to establish geographically uniform zones in this State to facilitate collaborative and coordinated planning and use of resources, to improve cooperation with other governmental and nonprofit entities at the local and regional level, to facilitate administrative efficiencies within State government, and, to the extent feasible, to establish one-stop sources in each region for citizens and businesses seeking State services at a regional level.

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

**"§ 143B-28.1. Create Collaboration for Prosperity Zones.**

For purposes of enhanced collaboration and cooperation between governmental agencies, planning, use of resources, and improved efficiency at a regional level, the State is hereby divided into eight zones as follows:

- (1) Western Region, consisting of Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, and Yancey Counties.
- (2) Northwest Region, consisting of Alleghany, Ashe, Alexander, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Davie, Iredell, Mitchell, Rowan, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yadkin Counties.
- (3) Southwest Region, consisting of Anson, Cabarrus, Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Stanly, and Union Counties.



- 1           (4) Piedmont-Triad (Central) Region, consisting of Alamance, Caswell,  
 2 Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford, Montgomery, Randolph, Rockingham, and  
 3 Stokes Counties.  
 4           (5) North Central Region, consisting of Chatham, Durham, Franklin, Granville,  
 5 Johnston, Nash, Orange, Person, Vance, Wake, Warren, and Wilson  
 6 Counties.  
 7           (6) Sandhills (South Central) Region, consisting of Bladen, Columbus,  
 8 Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Moore, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson,  
 9 and Scotland Counties.  
 10          (7) Northeast Region, consisting of Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan,  
 11 Currituck, Dare, Edgecombe, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Martin,  
 12 Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrrell, and Washington  
 13 Counties.  
 14          (8) Southeast Region, consisting of Brunswick, Carteret, Craven, Duplin,  
 15 Greene, Jones, Lenoir, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender, and Wayne  
 16 Counties."

17           **SECTION 1.(c)** Agencies shall, by January 1, 2014, report to the Joint Legislative  
 18 Commission on Governmental Operations and the Study Commission on Collaboration for  
 19 Prosperity on how they plan to abolish regions and transform them into Collaboration for  
 20 Prosperity Zones as defined by this act.

21           **SECTION 1.(d)** This Part becomes effective July 1, 2013.

## 22

## 23 **PART II. ABOLISH REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONS**

24           **SECTION 2.1.(a)** G.S. 158-8.1, 158-8.2, 158-8.3, 158-8.4, 158-8.4A, 158-8.5,  
 25 158-8.6, 158-8.7, 158-8.8, and 158-8.12 are repealed.

26           **SECTION 2.1.(b)** Article 4 of Chapter 158 is repealed.

27           **SECTION 2.1.(c)** G.S. 120-123(62) is repealed.

28           **SECTION 2.1.(d)** G.S. 143-506.10 reads as rewritten:

### 29 **"§ 143-506.10. Designation of growth centers; achieving balanced growth.**

30           It shall be the policy of the State of North Carolina to support the expansion of the State and  
 31 to designate growth areas or centers with the potential, capacity and desire for growth. The  
 32 Governor, with the advice of county and municipal government officials and citizens, is  
 33 charged with designating growth areas or centers, which shall include at least one center in  
 34 each North Carolina county. Designation of growth areas or centers shall be reviewed annually.  
 35 These designations may be used for the purpose of establishing priority consideration for State  
 36 and federal assistance for growth.

37           Progress toward achieving balanced growth shall be measured by the strengthening of  
 38 economic activity and the adequacy of public services within each of the State's multi-county  
 39 ~~regions and, as to the geographical area included, the Southeastern Economic Development~~  
 40 ~~Commission.~~ regions. The Governor, with the advice of county and municipal government  
 41 officials and citizens, shall develop measures of progress toward achieving balanced growth."

42           **SECTION 2.1.(e)** The Western North Carolina Regional Economic Development  
 43 Commission (AdvantageWest), the Southeastern North Carolina Regional Economic  
 44 Development Commission, North Carolina's Eastern Region, and North Carolina's Northeast  
 45 Commission may either wind up their affairs or reorganize as nonprofit corporations  
 46 reorganized to carry out the same purposes, and the nonprofit shall not receive State  
 47 appropriations.

48           **SECTION 2.2.** G.S. 143B-431 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

49           "(c1) Within each Collaboration for Prosperity Zone as defined in G.S. 143B-28.1, the  
 50 Department of Commerce shall perform the functions formerly provided by the North Carolina  
 51 Western Regional Economic Development Commission (AdvantageWest), the Southeastern

1 North Carolina Regional Economic Development Commission, North Carolina's Northeast  
2 Commission, and North Carolina's Eastern Region Development Commission. Specifically, the  
3 Department of Commerce shall do all of the following in each zone:

- 4 (1) Provide an interface in each zone for the Department's statewide programs  
5 and activities, especially those under subsections (c) and (e) of this section.
- 6 (2) Receive from any municipal, county, joint, or regional planning board or  
7 commission with jurisdiction within its area an economic development  
8 program for part or all of the area.
- 9 (3) Survey each zone and determine the assets, liabilities, and resources that the  
10 zone contributes to the economic development process.
- 11 (4) In collaboration with other State agencies and with local governments and  
12 regional and local government entities, develop and evaluate alternatives for  
13 economic development in each zone.
- 14 (5) In collaboration with other State agencies and with local governments and  
15 regional and local government entities, develop a preferred economic  
16 development plan for the zone and establish strategies for implementing the  
17 plan.
- 18 (6) Coordinate its activities in each zone with those of other State agencies and  
19 with local governments and local government entities, including  
20 coordinating activities and entering into contracts with any nonprofit  
21 corporation created to assist a former regional commission in carrying out  
22 that commission's powers and duties.

23 In carrying out the responsibilities required by this subsection, the Department of  
24 Commerce may conduct feasibility and other studies and formulate projects for (i) carrying out  
25 economic development programs, (ii) attracting new industries and encouraging existing  
26 industries, (iii) encouraging agricultural development, and (iv) other activities of a similar  
27 nature.

28 The Department of Commerce shall report annually by February 15 of each year to the  
29 Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations a summary of the preceding year's  
30 program activities, objectives, and accomplishments under this subsection."

31 **SECTION 2.3.** The Department of Commerce shall use funds available to carry  
32 out the requirements of this Part.

33 **SECTION 2.4.** Except as otherwise provided, this Part becomes effective July 1,  
34 2013.

### 35 36 **PART III. DEPARTMENTS TO HAVE AT LEAST ONE LIAISON IN EACH** 37 **COLLABORATION FOR PROSPERITY ZONE**

38 **SECTION 3.1.** No later than October 1, 2013, the Departments of Commerce,  
39 Environment and Natural Resources, and Transportation shall have at least one employee  
40 physically located in the same office in each of the Collaboration for Prosperity Zones set out  
41 in G.S. 143B-28.1 to serve as that department's liaison with the other departments and with  
42 local governments, schools and colleges, planning and development bodies, and businesses in  
43 that zone. The departments shall jointly select the office.

44 No later than October 1, 2013, the Community Colleges System Office shall  
45 designate at least one representative from a community college or from the Community  
46 Colleges System Office to serve as a liaison in each Collaboration for Prosperity Zone for the  
47 community college system, the community colleges in the zone, and other educational agencies  
48 and schools within the zone. A liaison may be from a business center located in a community  
49 college. These liaisons are not required to be collocated with the liaisons from the Departments  
50 of Commerce, Environment and Natural Resources, and Transportation.

1           **SECTION 3.2.** In addition to other related tasks assigned by their respective  
2 agencies, liaisons in each Collaboration for Prosperity Zone shall work to enhance  
3 collaboration and cooperation between their departments and other State agencies, local  
4 government agencies, and other regional public and nonprofit entities. The liaisons from the  
5 Departments of Environment and Natural Resources and Transportation shall work to  
6 consolidate and simplify the process for citizens and businesses seeking permits from their  
7 respective agencies. The liaisons from the Department of Commerce shall be used to support  
8 local economic development efforts, to coordinate such efforts, and to coordinate the  
9 Department of Commerce's activities within each Collaboration for Prosperity Zone. The  
10 liaisons from the community college system shall work closely with the Department of  
11 Commerce and other State and local government agencies and local businesses in the zone to  
12 promote job development through career technical education.

13           **SECTION 3.3.(a)** The Departments of Transportation and Environment and  
14 Natural Resources shall jointly report to the Office of State Budget and Management, the Joint  
15 Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations, the Joint Legislative Transportation  
16 Oversight Committee, the Environmental Review Commission, and the Study Commission on  
17 Interagency Collaboration for Prosperity, as follows:

- 18           (1) No later than October 1, 2013, on the establishment of colocated liaisons  
19 within each Collaboration for Prosperity Zone and a description of the  
20 activities the liaisons have been assigned to perform.
- 21           (2) No later than April 1, 2014, on the activities of the liaisons, specifically any  
22 activities undertaken that resulted in enhanced collaboration and  
23 coordination with the other Department and with other governmental  
24 agencies, improved administrative efficiencies, and any steps taken to make  
25 services to citizens and businesses within each zone more efficient,  
26 economical, and user-friendly.

27           **SECTION 3.3.(b)** The Community Colleges System Office shall report to the  
28 Office of State Budget and Management, the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental  
29 Operations, the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, and the Study Commission  
30 on Interagency Collaboration for Prosperity as follows:

- 31           (1) No later than October 1, 2013, on the establishment of liaisons within each  
32 Collaboration for Prosperity Zone and a description of the activities the  
33 liaisons have been assigned to perform.
- 34           (2) No later than April 1, 2014, on the activities of the liaisons, specifically any  
35 activities undertaken that resulted in enhanced collaboration and  
36 coordination with other governmental agencies, improved planning on use of  
37 educational resources, and improved administrative efficiencies.

38           **SECTION 3.3.(c)** The Department of Commerce shall include in its first report  
39 under G.S. 143B-431(c1), as enacted by this act, a report on the establishment and activities of  
40 its liaisons in each Collaboration for Prosperity Zone. The Department of Commerce shall send  
41 a copy of this report to the Office of State Budget and Management and to the Study  
42 Commission on Interagency Collaboration for Prosperity.

43           **SECTION 3.4.** The Departments of Commerce, Environment and Natural  
44 Resources, and Transportation and the Community Colleges System Office shall use funds  
45 available to carry out the requirements of this section.

46           **SECTION 3.5.** Except as otherwise provided, this Part becomes effective July 1,  
47 2013, and expires July 1, 2017.

48  
49 **PART IV. STUDY COMMISSION ON INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION FOR**  
50 **PROSPERITY**

1           **SECTION 4.1.(a)** Creation of Commission. – The Study Commission on  
2 Interagency Collaboration for Prosperity is established in the General Assembly.

3           **SECTION 4.1.(b)** Membership. – The Study Commission on Interagency  
4 Collaboration for Prosperity shall consist of eight members, four members of the Senate  
5 appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and four members of the House of  
6 Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

7           **SECTION 4.1.(c)** Cochairs; Vacancies; Quorum. – The Study Commission on  
8 Interagency Collaboration for Prosperity shall have two cochairs, one designated by the  
9 President Pro Tempore of the Senate and one designated by the Speaker of the House of  
10 Representatives from among their respective appointees. The Commission shall meet upon the  
11 call of the cochairs. Any vacancy on the Commission shall be filled by the original appointing  
12 authority. A majority of the members of the Commission constitutes a quorum.

13           **SECTION 4.1.(d)** Compensation; Administration. – Members of the Study  
14 Commission on Interagency Collaboration for Prosperity shall receive per diem, subsistence,  
15 and travel allowances in accordance with G.S. 120-3.1. The Commission, while in the  
16 discharge of its official duties, may exercise all powers provided for under G.S. 120-19 and  
17 G.S. 120-19.1 through G.S. 120-19.4. The Commission may meet in the Legislative Building or  
18 the Legislative Office Building.

19           With approval of the Legislative Services Commission, the Legislative Services  
20 Officer shall assign professional staff to assist the Study Commission on Interagency  
21 Collaboration for Prosperity in its work. The House of Representatives' and the Senate's  
22 Directors of Legislative Assistants shall assign clerical staff to the Study Commission on  
23 Interagency Collaboration for Prosperity, and the expenses relating to the clerical employees  
24 shall be borne by the Commission. The Study Commission on Interagency Collaboration for  
25 Prosperity may contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services, as provided by  
26 G.S. 120-32.02.

27           **SECTION 4.2.(a)** Duties. – The Study Commission on Interagency Collaboration  
28 for Prosperity shall review the reports submitted by the Departments of Commerce,  
29 Environment and Natural Resources, and Transportation and the Community Colleges System  
30 Office pursuant to Part III of this act and any other information the Commission deems  
31 relevant. The Commission may also study and recommend to the 2014 Regular Session of the  
32 2013 General Assembly legislation on the following topics:

- 33           (1) Enhancing collaboration and cooperation between State and other  
34 governmental agencies in order to streamline and improve services to  
35 citizens and businesses, to make such services more user-friendly, and to  
36 implement collaborative and cooperative interagency measures to enhance  
37 access to services.
- 38           (2) Reducing barriers faced by citizens and businesses in accessing services that  
39 are unnecessarily caused by agency specialization (which may produce a  
40 "silo mentality").
- 41           (3) Additional recommendations regarding liaison personnel, including  
42 expanding the requirement to other State departments.
- 43           (4) Ways to integrate collaboration between educational institutions in each  
44 Collaboration for Prosperity Zone on the one hand and other governmental  
45 agencies and local businesses on the other.
- 46           (5) Requiring the establishment of interagency one-stop shops in each  
47 Collaboration for Prosperity Zone.
- 48           (6) Consolidation of programs or services.
- 49           (7) Cross-training of employees.

1           (8) Identification of offices, equipment, and support services that may be  
2           efficiently and economically shared between agencies in each Collaboration  
3           for Prosperity Zone.

4 The report containing the recommendations shall identify any savings or costs identified by the  
5 Commission as likely to result from its recommendations.

6           **SECTION 4.2.(b)** Report. – The Study Commission on Interagency Collaboration  
7 for Prosperity shall report its recommendations under this section to the 2014 Regular Session  
8 of the 2013 General Assembly.

9           **SECTION 4.2.(c)** Agency Cooperation. – All State departments and agencies and  
10 local governments and their subdivisions shall furnish the Study Commission on Interagency  
11 Collaboration for Prosperity with any information in their possession or available to them.

12           **SECTION 4.2.(d)** Commission Termination. – The Study Commission on  
13 Interagency Collaboration for Prosperity shall terminate on the filing of its report or on July 1,  
14 2014, whichever is later.

15

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

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

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