

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025**

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**HOUSE BILL 600
Committee Substitute Favorable 7/1/26**

Short Title: Recognition of the Tuscarora. (Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 1, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO RESTORE OFFICIAL RECOGNITION TO THE TUSCARORA AND TO
2 PROVIDE THEM REPRESENTATION ON THE COMMISSION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.
3

4 Whereas, the passage of Senate Bill 642 by the 1971 General Assembly created the
5 North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, recognizing the existence within the State of
6 certain named Indian tribes and also acknowledged the fact that members of other Indian tribes
7 reside within the State; and

8 Whereas, the Tuscarora were recognized through treaties with the North Carolina
9 government, but were not among those tribes recognized in 1971; and

10 Whereas, the Tuscarora were a powerful tribe at the time of the English settlement of
11 the land that became North Carolina and Virginia and their prominent role in the early history of
12 both states is well-documented; and

13 Whereas, the Tuscarora and the Cherokee are the only tribes to hold treaties with the
14 North Carolina government; and

15 Whereas, the King of the Tuscarora was the signatory of the 1712 General Articles of
16 Peace and the 1714 Sun and Moon Peace Treaty and these treaties helped establish a lasting and
17 prosperous peace between the Tuscarora and the government and citizens of North Carolina; and

18 Whereas, the Tuscarora signed a stand-alone Treaty in 1717 with Governor Eden that
19 reserved 56,000 acres of historic Tuscarora territory in Bertie County exclusively for the
20 Tuscarora known as Indian Woods and in 1748, legislation reestablished the official boundaries
21 and drew a map of its proximities; and

22 Whereas, for two centuries, parcels of Indian Woods were allotted to descendants of
23 the Tuscarora Tribe and they have persisted as communities of Tuscarora People since that time
24 and have reorganized and incorporated into The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories and
25 appointed a tribal council to represent all North Carolina Tuscarora; and

26 Whereas, a review of historical documents and testimony confirmed the current Tribal
27 Council of The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories consists of descendants of the
28 historical Tuscarora Tribe; and

29 Whereas, the Tuscarora and its descendants contributed and continue to contribute to
30 the settlement and growth of the State of North Carolina, have maintained their ethnic
31 background, original language and culture and number among themselves families with names
32 well-known throughout the area and the State; Now, therefore,

33 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

34 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 71A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
35 section to read:



1 **"§ 71A-7.3. The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories; rights, privileges,**
 2 **immunities, obligations, and duties.**

3 The Indians who comprise The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories, whose ancestors
 4 signed treaties with the government of North Carolina and were granted the Indian Woods
 5 Reservation on the Roanoke River in Bertie County, shall, from and after July 1, 2026, be
 6 designated and officially recognized as The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories, and
 7 they shall continue to enjoy all their rights, privileges, and immunities as an American Indian
 8 Tribe with a recognized tribal governing body carrying out and exercising substantial
 9 governmental duties and powers similar to the State. The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka
 10 Territories shall be recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the
 11 United States to Indians because of their status as Indians. The Tuscarora shall maintain
 12 individual enrollment criteria, providing an opportunity for all North Carolina Tuscarora
 13 descendants to enroll and shall govern themselves in a manner that will benefit and unify all
 14 Tuscarora that come under their governance."

15 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 143B-407 reads as rewritten:

16 **"§ 143B-407. North Carolina State Commission of Indian Affairs – membership; term of**
 17 **office; chairman; compensation.**

18 (a) The State Commission of Indian Affairs shall consist of two persons appointed by the
 19 General Assembly, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Assistant Secretary of
 20 Commerce in charge of the Division of Employment Security, the Secretary of Administration,
 21 the Secretary of Environmental Quality, the Commissioner of Labor or their designees and ~~24~~23
 22 representatives of the Indian community. These Indian members shall be selected by tribal or
 23 community consent from the Indian groups that are recognized by the State of North Carolina
 24 and are principally geographically located as follows: the Coharie of Sampson and Harnett
 25 Counties; the Eastern Band of Cherokees; the Haliwa Saponi of Halifax, Warren, and adjoining
 26 counties; the Lumbees of Robeson, Hoke and Scotland Counties; the Meherrin of Hertford
 27 County; the Waccamaw-Siouan from Columbus and Bladen Counties; the Sappony; the
 28 Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation of Alamance and Orange Counties, The Tuscarora Indians
 29 of Kahtenuaka Territories, and the Native Americans located in Cumberland, Guilford, Johnston,
 30 Mecklenburg, Orange, and Wake Counties. The Coharie shall have two members; the Eastern
 31 Band of Cherokees, two; the Haliwa Saponi, two; the Lumbees, three; the Meherrin, one; the
 32 Waccamaw-Siouan, two; the Sappony, one; the Cumberland County Association for Indian
 33 People, two; the Guilford Native Americans, two; the Metrolina Native Americans, two; the
 34 Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, ~~one~~, one; the Triangle Native American Society, ~~one~~
 35 one; The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories, two. Of the two appointments made by
 36 the General Assembly, one shall be made upon the recommendation of the Speaker, and one shall
 37 be made upon recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Appointments by
 38 the General Assembly shall be made in accordance with G.S. 120-121 and vacancies shall be
 39 filled in accordance with G.S. 120-122.

40"

41 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 143B-135.5 reads as rewritten:

42 "Part 30A. American Indian Heritage Commission.

43 **"§ 143B-135.5. American Indian Heritage Commission established.**

44 ...

45 (b) Members. – The Commission shall consist of ~~12 members. The initial board shall be~~
 46 ~~selected on or before February 1, 2022, as follows:~~ 13 members, as follows:

- 47 (1) One representative recommended by each of the following tribes: Coharie,
 48 Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Haliwa-Saponi, Lumbee, Meherrin,
 49 Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, Sappony, The Tuscarora Indians of
 50 Kahtenuaka Territories, and Waccamaw-Siouan.

1 (2) One representative recommended by each of the following organizations:
2 Cumberland County Association for Indian People, Guilford Native American
3 Association, Metrolina Native American Association, and the Triangle Native
4 American Society.

5 (c) Terms. – The members recommended by the Coharie, Eastern Band of Cherokee
6 Indians, Haliwa-Saponi, and Lumbee Tribes and the members recommended by the Cumberland
7 County Association for Indian People and the Guilford Native American Association shall serve
8 initial terms of two years expiring on June 30, 2023. The members recommended by the
9 Meherrin, Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, Sappony, and Waccamaw-Siouan Tribes and
10 the members recommended by the Metrolina Native American Association and the Triangle
11 Native American Society shall serve initial terms of three years expiring on June 30, 2024. The
12 member recommended by The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories shall serve an initial
13 term of three years expiring on June 30, 2029. Upon the expiration of the terms of the initial
14 members of the Commission, each member shall be appointed to terms for three years and shall
15 serve until a successor is appointed.

16 "

17 **SECTION 4.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
18 Administration the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) in nonrecurring funds to assist the North
19 Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs with updating its website, materials, and other
20 documentation to reflect the new membership of the Commission.

21 **SECTION 5.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
22 Natural and Cultural Resources the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) in nonrecurring funds
23 to assist the American Indian Heritage Commission with updating its website, materials, and
24 other documentation to reflect the new membership of the Commission.

25 **SECTION 6.** Sections 4 and 5 of this act become effective July 1, 2026. The
26 remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.