

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 965

Short Title: Environmental Rights Constitutional Amendment. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives K. Brown, Harrison, Moss, and Lowery (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

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

April 14, 2025

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO AMEND THE NORTH CAROLINA CONSTITUTION TO PROTECT THE
3 RIGHT TO PURE WATER, CLEAN AIR, AND A PRESERVED ENVIRONMENT.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.** Article I of the North Carolina Constitution is amended by adding a
6 new section to read:

7 "Sec. 39. Right to clean water, clean air, and a preserved environment.

8 All the people have a right to clean water, clean air, and to the preservation of the natural,
9 scenic, cultural, and healthful qualities of the environment, including the beneficial ecosystem
10 services a clean and healthy environment provides. The State shall protect these rights equitably
11 for all people. The State, including each branch, agency, and political subdivision, shall serve as
12 trustee of the State's natural resources, among them, its air, waters, coastal lands, wetlands, open
13 lands, native flora, native fauna, and soils, and shall conserve, protect, and maintain these
14 resources for the benefit of all the people, including both present and future generations. This
15 provision and the rights stated herein are inalienable and self-executing."

16 **SECTION 2.** The amendment set out in Section 1 of this act shall be submitted to
17 the qualified voters of the State at a statewide general election to be held in November of 2026,
18 which election shall be conducted under the laws then governing elections in the State. Ballots,
19 voting systems, or both may be used in accordance with Chapter 163A of the General Statutes.
20 The question to be used in the voting systems and ballots shall be:

21 "[] FOR [] AGAINST

22 Constitutional amendment protecting the right of the people to pure water, clean air,
23 and a preserved environment."

24 **SECTION 3.** If a majority of votes cast on the question are in favor of the amendment
25 set out in Section 1 of this act, the Bipartisan State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement
26 shall certify the amendment to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State shall enroll the
27 amendment so certified among the permanent records of that office. The amendment set out in
28 Section 1 of this act is effective upon certification.

29 **SECTION 4.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes
30 law.

