

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009

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HOUSE BILL 1745*
PROPOSED COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE H1745-PCS70560-SY-2

Short Title: Survey Ag. Water Infrastructure Needs.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

May 18, 2010

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES AND THE DIVISION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE NORTH CAROLINA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, OTHER AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND FARMERS IN THE STATE TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO IDENTIFY AND REPORT AGRICULTURAL WATER INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMISSION ON WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE.

Whereas, North Carolina recognizes that water is our most basic and precious natural resource; and

Whereas, North Carolina has experienced several years of extreme drought over the past decade and will likely continue to experience extreme drought in the future; and

Whereas, North Carolina should identify and promote best management practices and leadership efforts in water efficiency and water conservation; and

Whereas, agriculture is one of the largest industries in the State, with an annual economic impact of over \$70 billion each year and employing over 640,000 people; and

Whereas, agriculture suffers acutely from the effects of water scarcity and drought, while at the same time playing an important role in the sustainable management of available water resources; and

Whereas, the United States Environmental Protection Agency conducts an assessment of the national public water system capital improvement needs every four years as part of its Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment, but this survey does not consider agricultural water infrastructure needs; and

Whereas, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, in conjunction with the Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation, other agricultural organizations, and farmers are currently in the process of developing a strategic plan for protecting agricultural water resources; Now, therefore,
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources shall continue to work with the North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation, other agricultural organizations, and farmers to develop a plan that will identify agricultural water



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1 infrastructure needs that are not accounted for in the surveys of water infrastructure needs
2 conducted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The plan shall include the
3 following:

- 4 (1) A mechanism for reporting the results of the data gathered to the General
5 Assembly in a manner that is helpful in assessing legislative and budgetary
6 issues that the General Assembly may need to address.
- 7 (2) Methods to identify current and future agricultural water use needs and
8 methods to ensure that those needs are met.
- 9 (3) Methods to identify best management practices for water conservation and
10 water efficiency by agricultural water users in the State.
- 11 (4) A schedule to update the plan on a regular basis.

12 **SECTION 2.** The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the
13 Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the Department of Environment and Natural
14 Resources shall report to the Legislative Study Commission on Water and Wastewater
15 Infrastructure by November 1, 2010, regarding the development of the plan, the proposed
16 methodology and time frame for implementing the plan, the estimated cost of the plan, and any
17 legislative changes needed to implement the plan.

18 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.