

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2013

**H.B. 356**  
**Mar 19, 2013**  
**HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK**

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HOUSE DRH80056-MN-8E\* (01/27)

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

Sponsors: Representatives Moffitt, Howard, Collins, and Murry (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH UNIFORM GEOGRAPHICAL ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS  
3 FOR THE STATE, TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION AND  
4 ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO TAKE ACTION TO ALIGN  
5 THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS WITH THESE UNIFORM REGIONS, AND TO  
6 CREATE THE COMMISSION ON REGIONALIZATION CONFORMITY TO  
7 DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS ON CONFORMING (I) THE EXISTING  
8 REGIONAL DIVISIONS OF THE SEVEN REGIONAL COMMISSIONS AND  
9 PARTNERSHIPS TO THE UNIFORM DIVISIONS AND (II) TO DEVELOP A  
10 SCHEDULE FOR STUDYING THE REGIONAL DIVISIONS OF OTHER STATE  
11 AGENCIES THAT HAVE REGIONAL OFFICES.

12 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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14 **PART I. CREATION OF UNIFORM REGIONAL DIVISIONS.**

15 **SECTION 1.(a)** Intent to Create Uniform Regional Divisions. – It is the intent of  
16 the General Assembly to establish geographically uniform administrative regions in this State  
17 for State agencies that have regional offices and, to the extent feasible, to consolidate regional  
18 offices and to establish a one-stop source in each region for citizens and businesses seeking  
19 State services at a regional office.

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

22 **"§ 143B-28.1. Uniform regional administrative divisions.**

23 For purposes of regionalization conformity, the State is hereby divided into seven regions  
24 as follows:

- 25 (1) Region I, consisting of Buncombe, Burke, Cherokee, Clay, Graham,  
26 Heywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell,  
27 Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, and Yancey Counties.  
28 (2) Region II, consisting of Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Caldwell,  
29 Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes, and  
30 Yadkin Counties.  
31 (3) Region III, consisting of Alamance, Caswell, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth,  
32 Guilford, Orange, Rockingham, Rowan, and Stokes Counties.  
33 (4) Region IV, consisting of Anson, Cabarrus, Chatham, Hoke, Lee,  
34 Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph, Richmond, Scotland, Stanly,  
35 and Union Counties.



- 1           (5)    Region V, consisting of Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Halifax,  
2                   Johnston, Nash, Person, Vance, Wake, Warren, Wayne, and Wilson  
3                   Counties.  
4           (6)    Region VI, consisting of Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Cumberland,  
5                   Duplin, Harnett, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender, Robeson, and Sampson  
6                   Counties.  
7           (7)    Region VII, consisting of Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Carteret, Chowan,  
8                   Craven, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Greene, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir,  
9                   Martin, Northampton, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrell, and  
10                  Washington Counties."

11           **SECTION 1.(c)** This Part becomes effective July 1, 2013.

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13   **PART II. IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIFORM REGIONAL DIVISIONS IN**  
14   **PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION**  
15   **AND ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES.**

16           **SECTION 2.(a)** DOT and DENR to Develop Plan to Implement Uniform Regions  
17 and to Establish One-Stop Services. – The Department of Transportation and the Department of  
18 Environment and Natural Resources shall, in cooperation with each other, develop a plan to  
19 align their administrative regions with the regions set out in G.S. 143B-28.1, as enacted by  
20 Section 1 of this act. The plan shall include the following:

- 21           (1)    Establishment of regional offices that are either shared or in the same  
22                  location.  
23           (2)    Steps necessary to create efficient, economical, and user-friendly one-stop  
24                  regional services for citizens and businesses. These may include shared  
25                  frontline staff, staff cross-trained in the basic requirements for permits issued  
26                  by both department, or a combination; consolidation of programs or services  
27                  and identification of any statutory or other legal impediments.  
28           (3)    Identification of equipment and support services that may be efficiently and  
29                  economically shared at shared regional facilities.  
30           (4)    Identification of any savings or additional costs reasonably likely to result  
31                  from the requirements of this section.  
32           (5)    A time line for completion of the plan.

33           **SECTION 2.(b)** Implementation of Plan and Reports. – The Departments of  
34 Transportation and Environment and Natural Resources shall jointly report on the plan  
35 developed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section to the Chairs of the House Appropriations  
36 Committee and the Cochairs of the Senate Appropriations/Base Budget Committee no later  
37 than June 1, 2013. The Departments of Transportation and Environment and Natural Resources  
38 shall begin implementation of the plan no later than July 1, 2013, and shall provide quarterly  
39 reports on its implementation by October 1, 2013, January 1, 2014, and April 1, 2014, and more  
40 frequently, if requested, to the Study Commission on Regionalization Conformity created in  
41 Section 4 of this act and to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee and the  
42 Environmental Review Commission.

43           **SECTION 2.(c)** The Department of Transportation and the Department of  
44 Environment and Natural Resources shall use funds available to carry out the requirements of  
45 this section.

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47   **PART III. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE TO STUDY REGIONAL ECONOMIC**  
48   **DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS.**

49           **SECTION 3.(a)** Department of Commerce Recommendations. – The Department  
50 of Commerce shall study and make recommendations on:

1 (1) How the four regional economic development commissions created in  
2 Chapter 158 of the General Statutes (the Western North Carolina Regional  
3 Economic Development Commission (AdvantageWest), North Carolina's  
4 Northeast Commission, the Southeastern North Carolina Regional Economic  
5 Development Commission, and North Carolina's Eastern Region  
6 Development Commission) and the three regional economic development  
7 partnerships (the Charlotte Regional Partnership, Inc., the Piedmont Triad  
8 Regional partnership, and the Research Triangle Regional Partnership) may  
9 be most efficiently and economically aligned with the regions set out in  
10 G.S. 143B-28.1, as enacted by Section 1 of this act, and what action is  
11 needed to implement the recommended changes, including any necessary  
12 legislation.

13 (2) Ways the programs and activities of the four regional economic development  
14 commissions and the three regional economic development partnerships can  
15 be best coordinated with those of the Department of Commerce and with  
16 other State agencies to create one-stop regional services for citizens and  
17 businesses.

18 In developing its recommendations, the Department shall consult with the four  
19 commissions and three partnerships. The Department shall also identify any savings or  
20 additional costs likely to result from the realignment of the commissions and partnerships,  
21 including any possibilities for them to leverage private funding whenever possible.

22 **SECTION 3.(b)** Report; Funds. – The Department of Commerce shall report its  
23 recommendations to the Study Commission on Regionalization Conformity created in Section  
24 4 of this act no later than September 1, 2013. The Department shall use funds otherwise  
25 available to conduct the study.

#### 26 **PART IV. STUDY COMMISSION ON REGIONALIZATION CONFORMITY.**

27 **SECTION 4.1.(a)** Creation of Commission. – The Study Commission on  
28 Regionalization Conformity is established in the General Assembly.

29 **SECTION 4.1.(b)** Membership. – The Study Commission on Regionalization  
30 Conformity shall consist of eight members, four members of the Senate appointed by the  
31 President Pro Tempore of the Senate and four members of the House of Representatives  
32 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

33 **SECTION 4.1.(c)** Cochairs; Vacancies; Quorum. – The Study Commission on  
34 Regionalization Conformity shall have two cochairs, one designated by the President Pro  
35 Tempore of the Senate and one designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives  
36 from among their respective appointees. The Commission shall meet upon the call of the  
37 cochairs. Any vacancy on the Commission shall be filled by the original appointing authority.  
38 A majority of the members of the Commission constitutes a quorum.

39 **SECTION 4.1.(d)** Compensation; Administration. – Members of the Study  
40 Commission on Regionalization Conformity shall receive per diem, subsistence, and travel  
41 allowances in accordance with G.S. 120-3.1. The Commission, while in the discharge of its  
42 official duties, may exercise all powers provided for under G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.1  
43 through G.S. 120-19.4. The Commission may meet in the Legislative Building or the  
44 Legislative Office Building.

45 With approval of the Legislative Services Commission, the Legislative Services  
46 Officer shall assign professional staff to assist the Study Commission on Regionalization  
47 Conformity in its work. The House of Representatives' and the Senate's Directors of Legislative  
48 Assistants shall assign clerical staff to the Study Commission on Regionalization Conformity,  
49 and the expenses relating to the clerical employees shall be borne by the Commission. The  
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1 Study Commission on Regionalization Conformity may contract for professional, clerical, or  
2 consultant services, as provided by G.S. 120-32.02.

3 **SECTION 4.2.(a)** Duties. – The Study Commission on Regionalization  
4 Conformity shall review the recommendations submitted by the Department of Commerce  
5 pursuant to Section 3 of this act and any other information the Commission deems relevant.  
6 After conducting its review, the Commission shall recommend to the 2014 Regular Session of  
7 the 2013 General Assembly a plan for aligning the seven regional commissions and  
8 partnerships with the regions set out in G.S. 143B-28.1 as enacted by Section 1 of this act. The  
9 recommendations shall include requiring local commerce entities to leverage private funding  
10 whenever possible, a proposed time line for implementation, and any required legislation,  
11 including conforming amendments. The report containing the recommendations shall identify  
12 any savings or costs identified by the Commission as likely to result from its recommendations.

13 **SECTION 4.2.(b)** Additional Study. – The Study Commission on Regionalization  
14 Conformity may also:

- 15 (1) After reviewing the quarterly reports submitted jointly by the Departments  
16 of Transportation and Environment and Natural Resources pursuant to  
17 Section 2 of this act and any other information the Commission deems  
18 relevant, recommend additional legislation, including conforming statutory  
19 amendments, that may be necessary to complete the implementation of the  
20 plan developed by the Departments pursuant to Section 2 of this act.
- 21 (2) Identify other State departments, agencies, boards, and commissions with  
22 regional offices that should be aligned with the uniform regional divisions  
23 established in G.S. 143B-28.1, as enacted by Section 1 of this act, and a  
24 proposed schedule for studying how to best align them.
- 25 (3) Study and identify whether there are (i) opportunities for citizens and  
26 businesses seeking services from State departments and agencies, especially  
27 in connection with permitting, or (ii) activities performed by State  
28 Departments and agencies at regional offices that could be better done by  
29 that entity's office in Raleigh, through the Internet or other means, or that  
30 could be better done at the county or local level.

31 **SECTION 4.2.(c)** Report. – The Study Commission on Regionalization  
32 Conformity shall report its recommendations under this section to the 2014 Regular Session of  
33 the 2013 General Assembly.

34 **SECTION 4.2.(d)** Agency Cooperation. – All State departments and agencies and  
35 local governments and their subdivisions shall furnish the Study Commission on  
36 Regionalization Conformity with any information in their possession or available to them.

37 **SECTION 4.2.(e)** Commission Termination. – The Study Commission on  
38 Regionalization Conformity shall terminate on the filing of its report.

#### 39 **PART V. EFFECTIVE DATE AND CONSTRUCTION.**

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

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