Amends Title [NO] Date ____________________ , 2023
Third Edition

Representative Longest

moves to amend the bill on page 10, lines 49-50, by inserting the following between the lines:

"ESTABLISH ROADSIDE BEAUTIFICATION STUDY COMMISSION

SECTION 27.5.(a) There is established the Roadside Beautification Study Commission (Commission).

SECTION 27.5.(b) The Commission shall be composed of 10 members appointed as follows:

(1) Three members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

(2) Three members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(3) Four members appointed by the Governor.

Vacancies on the Commission shall be filled by the appointing authority. The President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall each designate a cochair. A quorum of the Commission shall be a majority of its members.

The Commission may meet at any time upon call of the chairs. The Commission may meet in the Legislative Building or the Legislative Office Building, upon approval of the Legislative Services Commission. The Commission may contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services as provided by G.S. 120-32.02.

The Commission, while in the discharge of its official duties, may exercise all powers provided for under G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.1 through G.S. 120-19.4, including the power to request all officers, agents, agencies, and departments of the State to provide any information, data, or documents within their possession, ascertainable from their records, or otherwise available to them, and the power to subpoena witnesses and documents.

The Legislative Services Commission, through the Legislative Services Officer, upon approval, shall assign professional staff to assist the Commission in its work. The House of Representatives' and Senate's Directors of Legislative Assistants shall assign clerical staff to the Commission, and the expenses relating to the clerical employees shall be borne by the Commission. Members of the Commission shall receive per diem, subsistence, and travel allowances pursuant to G.S. 120-3.1, G.S. 138-6, G.S. 138-5, as appropriate.

SECTION 27.5.(c) The Commission shall study the following issues:

(1) The value of (i) roadside trees in protecting water quality, enhancing air quality, providing habitat for wildlife, reducing flooding, reducing noise impacts, providing ecosystem services, and enhancing tourism revenues, and
(ii) native trees, flowers, and shrubs on rights-of-way and concerns about nonnative species.

(2) The economic impact of selective vegetation removal to promote outdoor advertising visibility on economic development opportunities and tourism.

(3) How scenic beauty's value in promoting tourism and development can be measured against the costs of authorizing outdoor advertising on the landscape.

(4) Economic impacts to the North Carolina Department of Transportation in implementing the permit system for selective vegetation removal under current law as of January 1, 2023, and as applicable, any subsequent proposed or enacted legislative changes to vegetation cutting or removal laws or rules during the course of the Commission's study.

(5) Coordination of regulatory activities on outdoor advertising selective vegetation removal and other activities occurring on the rights-of-way between federal, State, and local government agencies.

(6) The alternatives to clearcutting of trees along highways and use of best practices in vegetation removal under the American National Standards Institute's standards on tree pruning.

(7) The laws and rules regulating vegetation cutting or removal around billboards and outdoor advertising in the states of South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, and Tennessee.

(8) The structure of the outdoor advertising industry and outdoor advertising companies in this State versus interstate or international billboard or outdoor advertising companies.

(9) The revenue potential for the North Carolina Department of Transportation from imposing a graduated system of road user fees on outdoor advertising for any company owning more than three signs. Such a fee would be dependent on income produced by the signs for advertising generated by the public investments in constructing and maintaining the adjacent road and rights-of-way.

(10) Any other issue the Commission deems relevant.

SECTION 27.5.(d) In conducting its study, the Commission shall create a list of stakeholders to be invited to report to the Commission at least three times during the process with recommendations and suggestions during an open meeting. Stakeholders invited shall include the following groups: farmers, rural landowners, neighborhood groups, outdoor advertising owners, small business owners, convention and visitors' bureaus, community development organizations, local governments, Garden Club of North Carolina, Sierra Club, North Carolina Outdoor Advertising Association, Scenic NC, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, and the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The Commission may also obtain assistance from University of North Carolina system constituent institutions, particularly from those university resources associated with studying transportation infrastructure, small business, and local government.
SECTION 27.5.(e) The Commission shall make a final report of its findings and recommendations to the 2024 Regular Session of the 2023 General Assembly by filing its report with the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The report shall include any proposed legislation or legislative recommendations. The Commission shall terminate upon filing its final report or upon the convening of the 2025 General Assembly, whichever is earlier."

SIGNED ____________________________________________

Amendment Sponsor

SIGNED ____________________________________________

Committee Chair if Senate Committee Amendment

ADOPTED _____________  FAILED _________________  TABLED _____________