GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA SESSION 2025

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Apr 9, 2025
HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH10385-NMa-26

	Short Title:	North Carolina Microplastics Study Act.	(Public)		
	Sponsors:	Representative Price.			
	Referred to:				
1		A BILL TO BE ENTITLED			
2	AN ACT TO	DIRECT THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLABORATORY TO	STUDY THE		
3	NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF THE PRESENCE OF MICROPI ASTICS IN THE WATER'				
4	OF THE STATE AND TO RECOMMEND STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING TH				
5	NEGATIV	VE IMPACTS OF MICROPLASTICS.			
6	W	hereas, microplastics can be ingested by aquatic organisms, tra	nsferring toxic		
7	chemicals into	their tissues: and			
8	Whereas, microplastics accumulate in food chains, impacting a wide range of specie				
9 10	disrupting reproductive systems and ecological balance; and				
10	whereas, microplastics can carry pathogens and pollutants, potentially spreading				
11		berges contaminated drinking water and seafood containing mic	roplastics pose		
12 12	notantial hadi	the ricks to humans; and	ropiastics pose		
13		un nisks to numans, and hereas, microplastics break down into papoplastics, which are even	hordor to dotact		
14	and remove	meleas, incroprastics break down into hanoplastics, which are even	torm waterway		
16	nollution: and	making cleanup errorts chanenging and contributing to long-	erin waterway		
10	pollution, and Whereas the presence of microplastics in waterways degrades water quality and				
18	biodiversity, threatening the overall health of aquatic ecosystems; Now, therefore,				
19	The General A	Assembly of North Carolina enacts:			
20	SE	ECTION 1.(a) Title. – This act shall be known and may be cite	d as the North		
21	Carolina Micr	coplastics Study Act.			
22	SE	ECTION 1.(b) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in th	is act:		
23 24	(1)	 Collaboratory. – The North Carolina Collaboratory at the Univ Carolina at Chapel Hill. 	versity of North		
25	(2)) Inland waters. – Permanent water bodies inland from the co	bastal zone and		
26		areas whose properties and use are dominated by the permane	nt, seasonal, or		
27		intermittent occurrence of flooded conditions.			
28	(3)	Macroplastics. – Plastic particles greater than 5 millimeters in	size.		
29	(4)) Microplastics. – Plastic particles between 1 nanometer and 5	millimeters in		
30		size.			
31	(5)	Nanoplastics. – Plastic particles less than 1 nanometer in size.			
32	(6)) Plastic particles. – Plastics that include macroplastics, primary	microplastics,		
33		secondary microplastics, nanoplastics, and raw plastic materia	ls.		
34	(7)) Primary microplastics. – Plastics that are intentionally manufa	ctured at small		
35		sizes. Examples include cosmetic beads, glitter, seed coatings	, and pellets or		



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1 2		nurdles (small, round, lens- or disc-shaped plastic pieces between 2 and 5 millimeters)	5
2 3 4	(8)	Raw plastic materials. – Plastics transported as pellets or nurdles before being melted and molded into other plastic-based products.	В
5	(9)	Secondary microplastics. – Raw plastic materials or macroplastics that have	е
6	GEO	been broken down into microplastics by various environmental pathways.	
/	SEC	TION I.(c) Purpose. – The Collaboratory shall investigate the potential impact	t
8 9	of plastic particles. To hel	es on waters of the State and develop strategies to address the impacts of plastic p guide the Collaboratory's work, the General Assembly finds that:	С
10	(1)	Although substantial scientific research on plastic particles exists, further	r
11 12		research will complement and support continuing efforts to reduce plastic	С
12	(2)	particle pontition.	_
13	(2)	In addition to the development of a long-term statewide strategy, early actions	s
14 15		environment should be pursued.	e
16	SEC	TION 1.(d) Staffing and Support. – The Department of Environmental Quality	y
17	shall provide sta	ff support to the Collaboratory. Additional staff may be hired or contracted by	y
18	the Collaborator	y through funds raised by or provided to it. The duties and compensation of any	y
19	additional staff s	hall be determined by and fixed by the Collaboratory, within available resources	
20	SEC	TION 1.(e) Collaboration. – The Collaboratory shall complete its functions and	d
21	duties in collab	poration with the State Division of Water Resources and other interested	b
22	governmental en	ntities. The Department of Environmental Quality shall cooperate with the	е
23	Collaboratory ar	d, upon request, shall assist the Collaboratory in fulfilling its responsibilities.	
24	SEC	TION 1.(f) Duties. – The Collaboratory is charged with the following duties:	
25	(1)	Identify plastic particles within the State's waterways.	
26	(2)	Research the harmful impact plastic particles have on the ecosystem.	
27	(3)	Collaborate with interested stakeholders and research institutions.	
28	(4)	Develop strategies to address the dangers of plastic particles.	
29	(5)	Implement strategies to prevent the future introduction of plastic particles into	0
30		the waterways and to reverse existing harm.	
31	SEC	TION 1.(g) Tasks. – The Collaboratory's tasks and deliverables include:	
32	(1)	Conduct research and planning related to the control of plastic particles within	n
33		the waterways of the State.	
34	(2)	Enter into contracts or agreements, including cost-sharing agreements, with	h
35		public or private agencies for research and development of methods of control	l
36		of plastic particles.	
37	(3)	Act for the protection and conservation of rivers, lakes, estuaries, tributaries	5.
38	()	inland ecosystems, coastal waters, beaches, and ocean ecosystems.	<i>,</i>
39	(4)	The development of a comprehensive prioritized research plan that includes	s
40		research that will support the development of risk assessments for plastic	С
41		particles in the marine environment habitat types of North Carolina.	
42	(5)	The development of standardized methods for sampling, detecting, and	h
43		characterizing plastic particles.	
44	(6)	The characterization of ambient concentrations of plastic particles in the	е
45		marine environment and an assessment of the associated environmenta	1
46		impacts, by plastic particle age, size, shape, type, and location.	
47	(7)	An investigation of the sources and relative importance of pathways	s
48	(')	associated with the environmental impacts of plastic particles determined to	0
49		be significant pursuant to subdivision (4) of this subsection.	

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1	(8)	The development of a risk assessment framework for plast	ic particles based	
2		on the best available information on exposure of plastic parti-	cles to organisms,	
კ ⊿	(0)	Including humans, through pathways that impact the marine	e environment.	
4	(9)	the marine environment from significant nethways of a	stic particles into	
6		amphasis on the sizes, shapes, and types of plastic particles t	hat are associated	
7		with significant environmental impacts	nat are associated	
2 2	(10)	Use of the risk assessment framework developed pursuant t	to subdivision (8)	
9	(10)	of this subsection to evaluate ontions, including source redu	ction and product	
10		stewardship techniques, barriers, costs, and benefits.	enon una produce	
11	(11)	Recommendations for policy changes, including statut	ory changes, or	
12	× ,	additional research that may be needed.		
13	SECT	TON 1.(h) Report. – The Collaboratory shall submit a com	prehensive report	
14	with findings, a	detailed risk assessment, and recommended actions to the	Joint Legislative	
15	Oversight Com	nittee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Res	sources and the	
16	Environmental R	eview Commission by July 1, 2026.		
17	SECT	TION 2. Funding. – Effective July 1, 2025, there is approximately approx	opriated from the	
18	General Fund to the Collaboratory the sum of one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to			
19	fund the work associated with the study of plastic particles on the waters of the State, including			
20	research initiatives, public hearings, stakeholder meetings, and report development. The			
21	Collaboratory may explore potential partnerships or federal grant opportunities to supplement			
22	research and study efforts.			
23	SECI	TON 3. Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective	when it becomes	
24	law.			