

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2005**

**SESSION LAW 2005-447  
SENATE BILL 681**

**AN ACT TO CLARIFY THE ROLE OF COUNTIES AND CITIES IN REGULATING  
CERTAIN FORESTRY ACTIVITIES.**

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** Article 23 of Chapter 153A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 153A-451. Restriction of certain forestry activities prohibited.**

(a) The following definitions apply to this section:

- (1) Development. – Any activity, including timber harvesting, that is associated with the conversion of forestland to nonforest use.
- (2) Forestland. – Land that is devoted to growing trees for the production of timber, wood, and other forest products.
- (3) Forestry. – The professional practice embracing the science, business, and art of creating, conserving, and managing forests and forestland for the sustained use and enjoyment of their resources, materials, or other forest products.
- (4) Forest management plan. – A document that defines a landowner's forest management objectives and describes specific measures to be taken to achieve those objectives. A forest management plan shall include silvicultural practices that both ensure optimal forest productivity and environmental protection of land by either commercially growing timber through the establishment of forest stands or by ensuring the proper regeneration of forest stands to commercial levels of production after the harvest of timber.
- (5) Forestry activity. – Any activity associated with the growing, managing, harvesting, and related transportation, reforestation, or protection of trees and timber, provided that such activities comply with existing State rules and regulations pertaining to forestry.

(b) A county shall not adopt or enforce any ordinance, rule, regulation, or resolution that regulates either:

- (1) Forestry activity on forestland that is taxed on the basis of its present-use value as forestland under Article 12 of Chapter 105 of the General Statutes.
- (2) Forestry activity that is conducted in accordance with a forest management plan.

(c) This section shall not be construed to limit, expand, or otherwise alter the authority of a county to:

- (1) Regulate activity associated with development. A county may deny a building permit or refuse to approve a site or subdivision plan for either a period of up to:
  - a. Three years after the completion of a timber harvest if the harvest results in the removal of all or substantially all of the trees that were protected under county regulations governing development from the tract of land for which the permit or approval is sought.
  - b. Five years after the completion of a timber harvest if the harvest results in the removal of all or substantially all of the trees that were protected under county regulations governing development from the tract of land for which the permit or approval is sought and the harvest was a willful violation of the county regulations.
- (2) Regulate trees pursuant to any local act of the General Assembly.
- (3) Adopt ordinances that are necessary to comply with any federal or State law, regulation, or rule.
- (4) Exercise its planning or zoning authority under Article 18 of this Chapter."

**SECTION 2.** Article 19 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 160A-458.5. Restriction of certain forestry activities prohibited.**

- (a) The following definitions apply to this section:
  - (1) Development. – Any activity, including timber harvesting, that is associated with the conversion of forestland to nonforest use.
  - (2) Forestland. – Land that is devoted to growing trees for the production of timber, wood, and other forest products.
  - (3) Forestry. – The professional practice embracing the science, business, and art of creating, conserving, and managing forests and forestland for the sustained use and enjoyment of their resources, materials, or other forest products.
  - (4) Forest management plan. – A document that defines a landowner's forest management objectives and describes specific measures to be taken to achieve those objectives. A forest management plan shall include silvicultural practices that both ensure optimal forest productivity and environmental protection of land by either commercially growing timber through the establishment of forest stands or by ensuring the proper regeneration of forest stands to commercial levels of production after the harvest of timber.
  - (5) Forestry activity. – Any activity associated with the growing, managing, harvesting, and related transportation, reforestation, or

protection of trees and timber, provided that such activities comply with existing State rules and regulations pertaining to forestry.

(b) A city shall not adopt or enforce any ordinance, rule, regulation, or resolution that regulates either:

(1) Forestry activity on forestland that is taxed on the basis of its present-use value as forestland under Article 12 of Chapter 105 of the General Statutes.

(2) Forestry activity that is conducted in accordance with a forest management plan that is prepared or approved by a forester registered in accordance with Chapter 89B of the General Statutes.

(c) This section shall not be construed to limit, expand, or otherwise alter the authority of a city to:

(1) Regulate activity associated with development. A city may deny a building permit or refuse to approve a site or subdivision plan for either a period of up to:

a. Three years after the completion of a timber harvest if the harvest results in the removal of all or substantially all of the trees that were protected under city regulations governing development from the tract of land for which the permit or approval is sought.

b. Five years after the completion of a timber harvest if the harvest results in the removal of all or substantially all of the trees that were protected under city regulations governing development from the tract of land for which the permit or approval is sought and the harvest was a willful violation of the city regulations.

(2) Regulate trees pursuant to any local act of the General Assembly.

(3) Adopt ordinances that are necessary to comply with any federal or State law, regulation, or rule.

(4) Exercise its planning or zoning authority under this Article.

(5) Regulate and protect streets under Article 15 of this Chapter."

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

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of August, 2005.

s/ Beverly E. Perdue  
President of the Senate

s/ James B. Black  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley

Governor

Approved 12:45 p.m. this 29<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2005