GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1997

SENATE BILL 621

Short Title: Hamlet Opera House Restoration Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Conder.

Referred to: Appropriations.

April 1, 1997

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

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AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THE HAMLET OPERA HOUSE RESTORATION.

Whereas, the renovation of the Hamlet Opera House is an important part of Hamlet's downtown revitalization efforts and overall economic development; and

Whereas, the renovated Opera House as a meeting facility and cultural and entertainment center for all residents of Richmond and surrounding counties will assist in the promotion of Hamlet as a railroad memorabilia and antique mecca drawing people to Hamlet from northern South Carolina and southcentral North Carolina; and

Whereas, the Opera House (placed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Main Street Commercial Historic District on March 19, 1992) will be an educational resource for students, teaching them about Hamlet's history, music, architecture, arts, and culture; and

Whereas, in 1990 Hamlet was voted an "All American City", and her past glory as a railroad hub was briefly recaptured when its amazing intact collection of early twentieth century commercial architecture was showcased in the filming of the movie Billy Bathgate; and

Whereas, in September 1991, a tragic fire at the Imperial Food's chicken plant killed 25 people; tragedy struck again in 1992 when the landmark Terminal Hotel was completely

destroyed by an arsonist; Richmond County is now the second most economically distressed county in the State; but from all this has come a determination to flourish; and Whereas, the City of Hamlet is the current owner of the Opera House (which was purchased with funds raised by the Seaboard Festival Day, Inc.), and the city actively assists with the daily operations and maintenance of this property with the Board of Directors of the Seaboard Festival Day, Inc.; and

Whereas, the City of Hamlet pledges financial support to the continuing efforts to make the Opera House successful; and

Whereas, the restoration of the Opera House will allow the use of the facility as part of the annual Seaboard Festival adding immeasurably to Hamlet's Centennial Year Celebration and providing a gathering place for Hamlet's citizens into the twenty-first century; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the City of Hamlet the sum of three hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$350,000) for the 1997-98 fiscal year and the sum of three hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$350,000) for the 1998-99 fiscal year for the renovation and furnishing of the Hamlet Opera House.

Section 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 1997.

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