GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA SESSION 2007

H HOUSE BILL 2612

Short Title: Water Resources Grants Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Allen; Coleman, Faison, Frye, Glazier, Harrison, Insko, McLawhorn, and Tarleton.

Referred to: Appropriations.

May 28, 2008

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES FOR REGIONAL COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.

Whereas, North Carolina's regional councils of government provide local governments in every part of the State with regional means to address water quality issues that stretch beyond any local government's boundaries; and

Whereas, safe and reliable water is critical to every community's economic development potential, as well as existing citizens and businesses; and

Whereas, all water supply and water quality issues cross local boundaries, calling for regional coordination to assure that water remains safe and available; and

Whereas, regional councils of government are in a unique position to help local governments deal collectively with water resource issues, identifying solutions that are tailored to conditions and water needs in each region, especially those struggling to meet infrastructure and environmental challenges; and

Whereas, regional councils of government, by working in concert with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, can bring local governments together to address critical water supply and water quality at a regional scale; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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SECTION 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources the sum of one million four hundred thousand dollars (\$1,400,000) for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. Of the funds appropriated by this section, the sum of eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000) shall be allocated each fiscal year to each of the State's 17 regional councils of government to be used by each regional council of government to develop and implement a nonregulatory water resource management program through the voluntary cooperation of local governments,

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water users, other stakeholders, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources may use up to forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) each fiscal year for costs of administering this act.

In developing and implementing the water resource SECTION 2. management program required under Section 1 of this act, each regional council of government shall carry out a plan of work that may include the following:

- Development of one or more multijurisdictional water resource (1) management plans in cooperation with local governments and key water user stakeholders, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, based on the water resource needs and geographic and hydrologic features in the region, including both surface and groundwater resources as appropriate to the region.
- Convening coalitions of local governments and major water users in (2) the respective regions to set strategies for sustaining water resources necessary to support sound economic development.
- Implementation of multijurisdictional projects and activities that (3) address water quantity and water quality problems identified in water resource management plans.
- (4) Identification of opportunities for improvements to make water systems more drought resistant, including assisting local governments with upgrading water supply plans to address potential water shortages and pursuing connections between water systems and wastewater system providers to achieve efficiencies and make systems more drought resistant.

SECTION 3.(a) The funds allocated to a regional council of government by Section 1 of this act shall be paid in two equal installments. The first payment to a regional council of government shall be made only after compliance with subdivision (b)(1) of Section 3 of this act, and the second payment shall be made only after compliance with subdivision (b)(2) of Section 3 of this act.

SECTION 3.(b) Each regional council of government receiving funds under this act shall comply with the following requirements:

- By September 21, 2008, the council shall present to the Department of (1) Environment and Natural Resources and the Fiscal Research Division the council's annual plan of work, goals, objectives, and proposed expenditures.
- By March 1, 2009, the council shall submit to the Department of (2) Environment and Natural Resources and the Fiscal Research Division a report of the council's accomplishments and of the actual expenditures of funds appropriated by this act during the previous reporting period.

SECTION 4. This act becomes effective July 1, 2008.