

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1991 SESSION

CHAPTER 80
HOUSE BILL 688

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE MARTIN COUNTY TO LEVY A ROOM OCCUPANCY
AND TRAVEL AND TOURISM TAX.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. Occupancy Tax. (a) Authorization and scope. The Martin County Board of Commissioners may by resolution, after not less than 10 days' public notice and after a public hearing held pursuant thereto, levy a room occupancy tax of up to three percent (3%) of the gross receipts derived from the rental of any room, lodging, or similar accommodation furnished by a hotel, motel, inn, tourist camp, or similar place within the county that is subject to sales tax imposed by the State under G.S. 105-164.4(a)(3). This tax is in addition to any State or local sales tax. This tax does not apply to accommodations furnished by nonprofit charitable, educational, or religious organizations, by summer camps, or by businesses that offer to rent no more than five units.

(b) Collection. Every operator of a business subject to the tax levied under this section shall, on and after the effective date of the levy of the tax, collect the tax. This tax shall be collected as part of the charge for furnishing a taxable accommodation. The tax shall be stated and charged separately from the sales records, and shall be paid by the purchaser to the operator of the business as trustee for and on account of the county. The tax shall be added to the sales price and shall be passed on to the purchaser instead of being borne by the operator of the business. The county shall design, print, and furnish to all appropriate businesses and persons in the county the necessary forms for filing returns and instructions to ensure the full collection of the tax.

(c) Administration. The county shall administer a tax levied under this section. A tax levied under this section is due and payable to the county finance officer in monthly installments on or before the fifteenth day of the month following the month in which the tax accrues. Every person, firm, corporation, or association liable for the tax shall, on or before the fifteenth day of each month, prepare and render a return on a form prescribed by the county. The return shall state the total gross receipts derived in the preceding month from rentals upon which the tax is levied.

A return filed with the county finance officer under this section is not a public record as defined by G.S. 132-1 and may not be disclosed except as required by law.

(d) Penalties. A person, firm, corporation, or association who fails or refuses to file the return required by this section shall be subject to and pay a penalty of ten dollars (\$10.00) for each day's omission. In case of failure or refusal to file the

return or pay the tax for a period of 30 days after the time required for filing the return or for paying the tax, there shall be an additional tax, as a penalty, of five percent (5%) of the tax due in addition to any other penalty, with an additional tax of five percent (5%) for each additional month or fraction thereof until the tax is paid. The board of commissioners may, for good cause shown, compromise or forgive the additional tax penalties imposed by this subsection.

Any person who willfully attempts in any manner to evade a tax imposed under this section or who willfully fails to pay the tax or make and file a return shall, in addition to all other penalties provided by law, be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000), imprisonment not to exceed six months, or both.

(e) Distribution and use of tax revenue. Martin County shall, on a monthly basis, remit the net proceeds of the occupancy tax to the Martin County Travel and Tourism Authority. The Authority may spend funds remitted to it under this subsection only to further the development of travel and tourism and cultural, recreational, and historic activities in Martin County through advertising and promotion, to sponsor tourist-oriented events and activities in Martin County, and to finance tourist-related capital activities and projects in Martin County. As used in this subsection, "net proceeds" means gross proceeds less the cost to the county of administering and collecting the tax, which may not exceed three percent (3%) of the gross proceeds.

(f) Effective date of levy. A tax levied under this section shall become effective on the date specified in the resolution levying the tax. That date must be the first day of a calendar month, however, and may not be earlier than the first day of the second month after the date the resolution is adopted.

(g) Repeal. A tax levied under this section may be repealed by a resolution adopted by the Martin County Board of Commissioners. Repeal of a tax levied under this section shall become effective on the first day of a month and may not become effective until the end of the fiscal year in which the repeal resolution was adopted. Repeal of a tax levied under this section does not affect a liability for a tax that was attached before the effective date of the repeal, nor does it affect a right to a refund of a tax that accrued before the effective date of the repeal.

Sec. 2. Martin County Travel and Tourism Authority. (a) Appointment and membership. When the board of commissioners adopts a resolution levying a room occupancy tax under this act, it shall also adopt a resolution creating the Martin County Travel and Tourism Authority, which shall be a public authority under the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act. The resolution shall provide that the Authority shall be composed of the following 12 members:

- (1) A Martin County Commissioner appointed by the Martin County Board of Commissioners.
- (2) Two owners or operators of restaurants, motels, hotels, or other taxable accommodations in Martin County that have at least five units, nominated by representatives of this industry, both to be appointed by the Martin County Board of Commissioners.

- (3) One member selected by the Martin County Chamber of Commerce to be appointed by the Martin County Board of Commissioners.
- (4) One member appointed by the Martin County Board of Commissioners selected from the Martin County Economic Development Commission.
- (5) Five members, one appointed by each member of the Martin County Board of Commissioners.
- (6) One member appointed by the Martin County Board of Commissioners selected from the Martin County Historical Society.
- (7) One member appointed by the Martin County Board of Commissioners selected from the Robersonville Downtown Merchants Association.

The appointees shall be made from throughout the County by the Martin County Board of Commissioners. All members of the Authority shall serve without compensation. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments. Members appointed to fill vacancies shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. The Authority shall elect each year from its membership a Chair. No member may serve as Chair more than two one-year terms in succession. The Authority shall meet at the call of the Chair or of any three members and shall adopt rules of procedure to govern its meetings. The Finance Officer for Martin County shall be the ex officio finance officer of the Authority.

(b) Terms of office. Members of the Authority shall serve three-year terms except that the Martin County Commissioner appointed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1) shall be appointed yearly by the chairman of the board of commissioners and initial appointees shall serve the following terms:

- (1) The Martin County Commissioner appointed pursuant to subdivision (a)(1): one year.
- (2) One representative of the motel and restaurant industry appointed pursuant to subdivision (a)(2): one year.
- (3) One representative of the motel and restaurant industry appointed pursuant to subdivision (a)(2): three years.
- (4) The representative of the Martin County Chamber of Commerce appointed pursuant to subdivision (a)(3): three years.
- (5) The representative of the Martin County Economic Development Commission appointed pursuant to subdivision (a)(4): two years.
- (6) Three members appointed by Martin County Commissioners pursuant to subdivision (a)(5): one year.
- (7) Two representatives appointed by Martin County Commissioners pursuant to subdivision (a)(5): three years.
- (8) The representative of the Martin County Historical Society appointed pursuant to subdivision (a)(6): two years.
- (9) The representative of the Robersonville Downtown Merchants Association appointed pursuant to subdivision (a)(7): three years.

(c) Limitation on terms. No member of the Authority shall serve more than two consecutive three-year terms.

(d) Powers and duties. The Authority may contract with any person, firm, or agency to assist it in carrying out the purposes for which the tax proceeds levied by this act may be expended. The board of county commissioners may from time to time determine an appropriate percentage not to exceed five percent (5%) of net proceeds that may be expended for administrative services.

(e) Reports. The Authority shall report quarterly and at the close of the fiscal year to the board of commissioners on its receipts and expenditures for the preceding quarter and for the year in such detail as the board may require.

(f) Notwithstanding the provisions of this act, the board of commissioners may abolish the Martin County Travel and Tourism Authority and itself function and carry out the duties of the Authority provided in this act.

Sec. 3. This act is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 8th day of May, 1991.

James C. Gardner
President of the Senate

Daniel Blue, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives