

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1995

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SENATE BILL 1362

Short Title: Rural Tourism Development Funds.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senators Martin of Pitt and Conder.

Referred to: Appropriations.

May 28, 1996

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO CREATE AND IMPLEMENT THE RURAL
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
Commerce the sum of four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) for the 1996-97 fiscal
year to be used for creating and implementing the Rural Tourism Development Program.

Sec. 2. (a) The Rural Tourism Development Program is created to assist the
State's rural counties in further developing the economic potential of the travel and
tourism industry.

(b) The function of the program shall be:

- (1) Stimulate the growth of tourism-based businesses in rural regions of the
State where the potential for economic growth in the tourism industry is
high;
- (2) Assist rural regions of the State that have identified tourism
development as a priority for their overall economy;
- (3) Promote regional cooperation for the purpose of enhancing the tourism
industry in rural regions of the State;
- (4) Strengthen the ability of the rural regions of the State to work
effectively with the National Park Service, National Forest Service,

1 State Parks, State Travel and Tourism Division, and local governments
2 for tourism development;

3 (5) Aid the overall economic development potential of the rural regions of
4 the State, specifically those counties classified by the Department of
5 Commerce as "distressed";

6 (6) Encourage and stimulate the involvement of tourism-related businesses
7 in the economic growth of rural regions of the State; and

8 (7) Enhance the development of tourism-dependent rural regions as year-
9 round destinations.

10 Sec. 3. (a) The Department of Commerce shall develop procedures for the
11 administration and distribution of funds allocated to the Rural Tourism Development
12 Program under guidelines set forth in this section.

13 (b) Funds shall be distributed under the following guidelines:

14 (1) Eligible organizations shall make application under procedures
15 established by the Department of Commerce;

16 (2) Eligible organizations shall be nonprofit tourism-related organizations
17 located in the State's rural regions;

18 (3) Priority shall be given to eligible organizations that have significant
19 involvement of travel and tourism-related businesses;

20 (4) Priority shall be given to eligible organizations serving counties
21 classified by the Department of Commerce as being "distressed";

22 (5) Priority shall be given to eligible organizations that match funds; and

23 (6) Funds may not be used for the renting or purchasing of land, buildings,
24 or for financing debt.

25 Sec. 4. The Secretary of Commerce shall make an annual report on the
26 program to the General Assembly.

27 Sec. 5. This act becomes effective July 1, 1996.