

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007**

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HOUSE BILL 2016

Short Title: Study/NC Growers Consortium/Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Faison.

Referred to: Appropriations.

May 10, 2007

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE NORTH CAROLINA GROWERS CONSORTIUM
3 COMMISSION AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THE STUDY.

4 Whereas, the State of North Carolina and the Dole Food Company are
5 making tremendous investments of public and private resources to establish the North
6 Carolina Research Campus and the Dole Nutrition Institute in Kannapolis to conduct
7 research on food production and nutrition; and

8 Whereas, the Dole Food Company has built a \$54 million salad-packaging
9 plant in Bessemer City; and

10 Whereas, the Dole Food Company is considering building a frozen-fruit plant
11 in North Carolina, but there is currently insufficient production of North Carolina fruits
12 such as blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, and raspberries to supply such a facility;
13 and

14 Whereas, public and private investments will create tremendous opportunities
15 for North Carolina farmers and rural communities; Now, therefore,
16 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

17 **SECTION 1.(a)** There is created the North Carolina Growers Consortium
18 Commission. The Commission shall consist of 16 members appointed as follows:

- 19 (1) Three members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.
20 (2) Three members appointed by the Speaker of the House of
21 Representatives.
22 (3) Three members appointed by the Governor.
23 (4) Five members appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture.
24 (5) Five members appointed by the Secretary of Commerce.

25 **SECTION 1.(b)** The Commission is authorized to study the following:

- 26 (1) Economic factors affecting the ability of North Carolina farmers to
27 increase production of blueberries and other fruits, including
28 availability and cost of credit.
29 (2) Obstacles to increasing production such as availability of farm labor.

1 (3) State laws or rules that may interfere with increased production of
2 fruits and vegetables.

3 (4) The need for State assistance to farmers who have an interest in
4 producing fruits and vegetables, such as tax incentives, agronomic
5 services, farm business planning, and other farm services.

6 **SECTION 1.(c)** The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint a
7 cochair, and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall appoint a cochair for the
8 Commission. The Commission may meet at any time upon the joint call of the cochairs.
9 Vacancies on the Commission shall be filled by the same appointing authority as made
10 the initial appointment.

11 Subject to the approval of the Legislative Services Commission, the
12 Commission may meet in the Legislative Building or the Legislative Office Building.
13 The Legislative Services Commission, through the Legislative Services Officer, shall
14 assign professional staff to assist the Commission in its work. The House of
15 Representatives' and the Senate's Supervisors of Clerks shall assign clerical support staff
16 to the Commission, and the expenses relating to the clerical employees shall be borne
17 by the Commission. Members of the Commission shall receive subsistence and travel
18 expenses at the rates set forth in G.S. 120-3.1, 138-5, or 138-6, as appropriate.

19 All departments, agencies, institutions, and officers of the State and its
20 political subdivisions shall provide facilities, data, and other assistance upon request of
21 the Commission.

22 **SECTION 1.(d)** The Commission may submit an interim report to the 2008
23 Regular Session of the 2007 General Assembly on the Commission's findings and
24 recommendations, which may include any statutory changes necessary to implement the
25 recommendations. The Commission shall make a final report to the 2009 General
26 Assembly and shall terminate upon the earlier of the filing of its final report or the
27 convening of the 2009 General Assembly.

28 **SECTION 1.(e)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the General
29 Assembly the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) for the 2007-2008 fiscal
30 year and the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) for the 2008-2009 fiscal
31 year to be used by the Legislative Services Commission for the expenses of the North
32 Carolina Growers Consortium Commission established by this section.

33 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2007.