

Article 3.

Boundaries.

§ 153A-17. Existing boundaries.

The boundaries of each county shall remain as presently established, until changed in accordance with law. (1973, c. 822, s. 1.)

§ 153A-18. Uncertain or disputed boundary.

(a) If two or more counties are uncertain as to the exact location of the boundary between them, the North Carolina Geodetic Survey (NCGS), on a cooperative basis, shall assist counties in defining and monumenting the location of the uncertain or disputed boundary as established in accordance with law. Upon receiving written request from all counties adjacent to the uncertain or disputed boundary, the NCGS may cause the boundary to be surveyed, marked, and mapped. The counties may appoint special commissioners to supervise the surveying, marking, and mapping. A commissioner so appointed or a person surveying or marking the boundary may enter upon private property to view and survey the boundary or to erect boundary markers. Upon ratification of the survey by the board of commissioners of each county, a map showing the surveyed boundary shall be recorded in the office of the register of deeds of each county in the manner provided by law for the recordation of maps or plats and in the Secretary of State's office. The map shall contain a reference to the date of each resolution of ratification and to the page in the minutes of each board of commissioners where the resolution may be found. Upon recordation, the map is conclusive as to the location of the boundary. Upon reestablishing all, or some portion, of a county boundary, and if after the NCGS submits the results of the survey to the requesting counties, and the requesting counties have not ratified the reestablished boundary within one year of receiving the (map) survey plat denoting the location of the reestablished boundary, the survey plat will become conclusive as to the location of the boundary and will be recorded in the Register of Deeds in each affected county and in the Secretary of State's office. The Chief of the NCGS (State Surveyor) will notify each affected party in writing of the action taken. As used in this subsection, an "affected party" means both (i) the governing body of a county that the reestablished boundary denotes the extent of its jurisdiction and (ii) a property owner whose real property has been placed in whole or in part in another county due to the reestablished boundary. The North Carolina Geodetic Survey maintained by the Division of Emergency Management of the Department of Public Safety is the authoritative source for North Carolina county and State boundary information.

(b) If two or more counties dispute the exact location of the boundary between them, and the dispute cannot be resolved pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, any of the counties may apply to a superior court judge who has jurisdiction pursuant to G.S. 7A-47.1 or 7A-48 in any of the districts or sets of districts as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1 in which any of the counties is located for appointment of a boundary commission. The application shall identify the disputed boundary and ask that a boundary commission be appointed. Upon receiving the application, the court shall set a date for a hearing on whether to appoint the commission. The court shall cause notice of the hearing to be served on the other county or counties. If, after the hearing, the court finds that the location of the boundary is disputed, it shall appoint a boundary commission.

The commission shall consist of one resident of each disputing county and a resident of some other county. The court may appoint one or more surveyors to assist the commission. The commission shall locate, survey, and map and may mark the disputed boundary. To do so it may take evidence and hear testimony, and any commissioner and any person surveying or marking the boundary may enter upon private property to view and survey the boundary or to erect boundary

markers. Within 45 days after the day it is appointed, unless this time is extended by the court, the commission shall make its report (which shall include a map of the surveyed boundary) to the court. To be sufficient, the report must be concurred in by a majority of the commissioners. If the court is satisfied that the commissioners have made no error of law, it shall ratify the report, after which the map shall be recorded in the office of the register of deeds of each county in the manner provided by law for the recordation of maps or plats and in the Secretary of State's office. Upon recordation, the map is conclusive as to the location of the boundary.

The disputing counties shall divide equally the costs of locating, surveying, marking, and mapping the boundary, unless the court finds that an equal division of the costs would be unjust. In that case the court may determine the division of costs.

(c) Two or more counties may establish the boundary between them pursuant to subsection (a) of this section. Those boundaries are defined by natural monuments such as rivers, streams, and ridgelines. The use of base maps prepared from orthophotography or Light Detection and Ranging may be used if said natural monuments are visible, which base maps are referenced and connected to the North Carolina State Plane Coordinate System established pursuant to Chapter 102 of the General Statutes. The orthophotography or Light Detection and Ranging shall be prepared in compliance with the State's adopted orthophotography Light Detection and Ranging standard, respectively. Upon ratification of the location of the boundary determined from orthophotography, Light Detection and Ranging, or a combination of both, by the board of commissioners of each county, the map showing the boundary and the monuments of the National Geodetic Survey and North Carolina Coordinate System shall be recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds of each county and in the Secretary of State's office. The map shall contain a reference to the date of each resolution of ratification and to the page in the minutes of each board of commissioners where the resolution may be found and county boundary metadata and State plane coordinates of all county boundary points information. Upon recordation, the map is conclusive as to the location of the boundary. (1836, c. 3; R.C., c. 27; Code, s. 721; Rev., s. 1322; C.S., s. 1299; 1925, c. 251; 1973, c. 822, s. 1; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 121; 1997-299, s. 1; 2017-170, s. 2; 2023-92, s. 3.)

§ 153A-19. Establishing and naming townships.

(a) A county may by resolution establish and abolish townships, change their boundaries, and prescribe their names, except that no such resolution may become effective during the period beginning January 1, 1998, and ending January 2, 2000, and any resolution providing that the boundaries of a township shall change automatically with changes in the boundaries of a city shall not be effective during that period. The current boundaries of each township within a county shall at all times be drawn on a map, or set out in a written description, or shown by a combination of these techniques. This current delineation shall be available for public inspection in the office of the clerk.

(b) Any provision of a city charter or other local act which provides that the boundaries of a township shall change automatically upon a change in a city boundary shall not be effective during the period beginning January 1, 1998, and ending January 2, 2000.

(c) The county manager or, where there is no county manager, the chairman of the board of commissioners, shall report township boundaries and changes in those boundaries to the United States Bureau of the Census in the Boundary and Annexations Survey. In responding to the surveys, each county manager or, if there is no manager, chairman of the board of commissioners shall consult with the county board of elections and other appropriate local agencies as to the location of township boundaries, so that the Census Bureau's mapping of township boundaries does

not disagree with any county voting precinct boundaries that may be based on township boundaries. (1868, c. 20, s. 8; Code, s. 707; Rev., s. 1318; C.S., s. 1297; 1973, c. 822, s. 1; 1987, c. 715, s. 1; c. 879, s. 2; 1993, c. 352, s. 1; 1995, c. 423, s. 4.)

§ 153A-20. Map of electoral districts.

If a county is divided into electoral districts for the purpose of nominating or electing persons to the board of commissioners, the current boundaries of the electoral districts shall at all times be drawn on a map, or set out in a written description, or shown by a combination of these techniques. This current delineation shall be available for public inspection in the office of the clerk. (1973, c. 822, s. 1.)

§ 153A-21. Repealed by Session Laws 1973, c. 884.

§ 153A-22. Redefining electoral district boundaries.

(a) If a county is divided into electoral districts for the purpose of nominating or electing persons to the board of commissioners, the board of commissioners may find as a fact whether there is substantial inequality of population among the districts.

(b) If the board finds that there is substantial inequality of population among the districts, it may by resolution redefine the electoral districts.

(c) Redefined electoral districts shall be so drawn that the quotients obtained by dividing the population of each district by the number of commissioners apportioned to the district are as nearly equal as practicable, and each district shall be composed of territory within a continuous boundary.

(d) No change in the boundaries of an electoral district may affect the unexpired term of office of a commissioner residing in the district and serving on the board on the effective date of the resolution. If the terms of office of members of the board do not all expire at the same time, the resolution shall state which seats are to be filled at the initial election held under the resolution.

(e) A resolution adopted pursuant to this section shall be the basis of electing persons to the board of commissioners at the first general election for members of the board of commissioners occurring after the resolution's effective date, and thereafter. A resolution becomes effective upon its adoption, unless it is adopted during the period beginning 150 days before the day of a primary and ending on the day of the next succeeding general election for membership on the board of commissioners, in which case it becomes effective on the first day after the end of the period.

(f) Not later than 10 days after the day on which a resolution becomes effective, the clerk shall file in the Secretary of State's office, in the office of the register of deeds of the county, and with the chairman of the county board of elections, a certified copy of the resolution.

(g) This section shall not apply to counties where under G.S. 153A-58(3)d. or under public or local act, districts are for residence purposes only, and the qualified voters of the entire county nominate all candidates for and elect all members of the board. (1981, c. 795.)

§§ 153A-23 through 153A-24. Reserved for future codification purposes.