

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2009**

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**HOUSE BILL 1640**

Short Title: Study/Economic Impact of Arts/Culture in WNC. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Fisher, Goforth, Haire, Whilden (Primary Sponsors); and Tarleton.

Referred to: Environment and Natural Resources, if favorable, Appropriations.

May 7, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON THE  
ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ARTS AND CULTURE IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, tourism is vital to a strong economy and, during these difficult economic times, it is important to make every effort to promote tourism to boost economic development; and

Whereas, while Western North Carolina attracts thousands of visitors to its well-known attractions such as the Appalachian Trail, Blowing Rock, Chimney Rock Park, Fontana Dam and Lake, Grandfather Mountain, Great Smoky Mountains, Linville Caverns, Nantahala National Forest, and Pisgah National Forest, the region also has a rich tradition of arts and culture; and

Whereas, Western North Carolina is home to numerous museums, performing arts centers, theatres, and art galleries, including the Asheville Art Museum and Pack Square Conservancy; and

Whereas, for generations, Western North Carolina artists have made significant contributions to the region and the State through pottery, paintings, weaving, woodworking, glassmaking, photography, jewelry making, and other mediums; and

Whereas, various regional festivals are held throughout the year to showcase Western North Carolina's cultural heritage, including Folkmoot USA, Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, Rhododendron Festival, Flat Rock Music Festival, Foothills Highland Games, Lake Eden Arts Festival, Appalachian Summer Festival, MerleFest, and Bele Chere; and

Whereas, various classes in traditional music, dance, and crafts, as well as creative writing are offered by the local universities, community colleges, John C. Campbell Folk School, and the Penland School of Crafts; and

Whereas, art and culture, both historical and contemporary, are central and specific to Western North Carolina's tourism industry and regional economic development in attracting business and individual relocation to and investment in the region's rural and urban communities; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.(a)** There is created the Joint Legislative Study Commission on the Economic Impact of Arts and Culture in Western North Carolina (Commission). The Commission shall be composed of eight voting members and one ex officio nonvoting member, as follows:

- (1) Four members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, to include:



- 1 a. Three members of the Senate.
- 2 b. One member of the general public.
- 3 (2) Four members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to
- 4 include:
- 5 a. Three members of the House of Representatives.
- 6 b. One member of the general public.
- 7 (3) The Secretary of Cultural Resources or the Secretary's designee, as an ex
- 8 officio nonvoting member.

9 Vacancies in membership shall be filled by the original appointing authority. The  
10 President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall  
11 each designate a cochair of the Commission from their appointees.

12 **SECTION 1.(b)** The Commission shall study issues relating to the economic  
13 impact of arts and culture in Western North Carolina and the State. In conducting its study, the  
14 Commission shall do the following:

- 15 (1) Examine how art and culture infrastructure and assets affect Western North  
16 Carolina.
- 17 (2) Consider how the State can enhance travel and tourism through the  
18 advancement of the arts and culture in Western North Carolina.
- 19 (3) Any other issues the Committee deems relevant to the study.

20 **SECTION 1.(c)** The Commission, while in discharge of its official duties, may  
21 exercise all powers provided for under G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.1 through G.S. 120-19.4.  
22 The Commission may contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services as provided by  
23 G.S. 120-32.02. Subject to the approval of the Legislative Services Commission, the  
24 Commission may meet in the Legislative Building or the Legislative Office Building. The  
25 Legislative Services Commission, through the Legislative Services Officer, shall assign  
26 professional staff to assist the Commission in its work. The House of Representatives' and the  
27 Senate's Supervisors of Clerks shall assign clerical support staff to the Commission, and the  
28 expenses relating to clerical employees shall be borne by the Commission. Members of the  
29 Commission shall receive subsistence and travel expenses at the rates set forth in G.S. 120-3.1,  
30 138-5, or 138-6, as appropriate.

31 **SECTION 1.(d)** The Commission shall submit a final written report of its findings  
32 and recommendations by February 1, 2011. All reports shall be filed with the President Pro  
33 Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Legislative  
34 Librarian. Upon filing its final report, the Commission shall terminate.

35 **SECTION 2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the General  
36 Assembly the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) for the 2009-2010 fiscal year for  
37 the expenses of the Commission established by this act.

38 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2009.