

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2023

**H.B. 180**  
**Feb 22, 2023**  
**HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK**

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**HOUSE BILL DRH40093-LG-22**

Short Title: Adopt Haywood County as Elk Capital of NC. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Pless.

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT ADOPTING HAYWOOD COUNTY AS THE ELK CAPITAL OF THE STATE OF  
3 NORTH CAROLINA.

4 Whereas, due to overhunting and habitat loss in the mid-1800s, the elk population  
5 was drastically reduced in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park; and

6 Whereas, in 2001, an initial 52 elk were released in Cataloochee Valley, a section of  
7 the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, located in Haywood County as an experimental  
8 project to reintroduce elk in the area; and

9 Whereas, reintroducing the elk has been a resounding success in Haywood County,  
10 resulting in a herd that has grown to over 200 elk; and

11 Whereas, the herd can be spotted in Cataloochee Valley, Maggie Valley, and other  
12 parts of Haywood County; and

13 Whereas, the elk project has played a large role in tourism to Haywood County; and

14 Whereas, local restaurants and shops in Haywood County proudly post pictures of the  
15 elk in front of their establishments and on social media to attract more customers; and

16 Whereas, the elk is a great part of Haywood County's brand and is used heavily in its  
17 logo and marketing; and

18 Whereas, Haywood County created the Smoky Mountain Elk Fest, an annual festival  
19 to celebrate the reintroduction of the elk and the conservation and habitat of the elk; and

20 Whereas, Haywood County should be adopted as the official elk capital of the State  
21 of North Carolina; Now, therefore,

22 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

23 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 145 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new  
24 section to read:

25 "**§ 145-52. State elk capital.**

26 Haywood County is adopted as the official elk capital of the State of North Carolina."

27 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.

