



Agriculture

Approved Goals

AG-1: Support state funding and staffing for agricultural research, Cooperative Extension services and other agriculture-related efforts to support the largest economic driver in North Carolina.

AG-2: Support legislation allowing counties to partner with neighboring counties to establish multijurisdictional regional Agricultural Business Districts that allow for favorable taxation and incentives to attract agricultural businesses to the region.

Guiding Principles

- The Association supports local control over land-use decision-making and its impact on the agricultural community.
- The Association supports state policies providing local options and tools for the preservation of farmland if they serve the best interest of all counties.
- The Association supports research, education and outreach with various public and private partnerships that result in agricultural development opportunities, sustainable initiatives producing low-cost food and energy that will, in turn, create healthy local economies.
- Agricultural issues related to the environment transcend governmental boundaries and require close coordination of policy and action by federal, state and local governments.
- Powers delegated to the counties for the protection of the public health are important for protecting the land and water resources that are vital for agricultural endeavors.
- The General Assembly should provide funds for any increased county responsibility related to animal control operations and/or facilities.



Environment

Approved Goals

ENV-1: Support legislation to increase funding for the Clean Water Management Trust Fund for water and sewer infrastructure projects, and land conservation to enhance water quality.

ENV-2: Support legislation to study and address air quality matters related to the removal and treatment of coal ash deposits.

ENV-3: Support legislation to provide for and fund a comprehensive statewide approach to noxious aquatic vegetation control in public water reservoirs.

Guiding Principles

- Public policy on environmental protection must recognize that all physical human activities have an impact on the environment, and provide recognition that there must be a balance between those activities and the environment.
- Enhancements to the environment laws of North Carolina should be justified by sound science and information and based on a clear rationale and purpose for regulatory change.
- State agencies responsible for developing administrative rules to implement federal and state policies should involve local governments in the process at the earliest stages of development and should proceed only after thorough analyses of health, environmental and fiscal risks and impacts.
- State agencies issuing permits for activities that affect the environment should give local governments ample opportunity to comment on proposed permits for consistency with local plans and policies.
- If state law delegates responsibility to local governments for implementing, monitoring and enforcing environmental policy, the state should provide optimum flexibility and discretion in setting fees at the local level to carry out these responsibilities.



General Government

Approved Goals

GG-1: Support increased state funding for transportation construction and maintenance needs, and support legislation to ensure that the STI funding formula recognizes that one size does not fit all and that projects in both rural and urban areas are prioritized and funded.

GG-2: Seek legislation to authorize counties to require HOAs or developers to post maintenance bonds for publicly dedicated subdivision roads, require DOT to expedite acceptance of subdivision roads into the state road system, and implement a statewide approach to maintaining pre-subdivision ordinance roads.

GG-3: Seek legislation, funding, and other efforts to expand digital infrastructure/broadband capability to the un-served and under-served areas of the state.

GG-4: Support goals of the NC Military Affairs Commission.

Guiding Principles

- The Association recognizes the importance of the State-County partnership and its unique role in providing services to all citizens.
- The State should **actively** seek input from counties while developing rules and regulations that impact counties, particularly concerning property rights.
- Local general purpose governments are the building blocks for solving regional problems; regional approaches should be based on the need to strengthen and support local governments.
- Intergovernmental agreements should be used where appropriate to attain efficient performance, as determined by local elected officials.
- Encourage public-private partnerships when in the best interest of the citizens.
- Reserve federal action for those areas where state and local governments are not adequate and where continuing national involvement is necessary, e.g. national defense, provided resources are made available by the national government.
- All local government institutions should be engaged in developing and coordinating services to meet the needs of citizens. Counties will strive to maintain and enhance these partnerships



Health and Human Services

Approved Goals

HHS-1: Support increased state funding for behavioral health services and facilities at the state and local level, including dedicated resources for community paramedicine projects. Support Medicaid reimbursement to EMS for behavioral health transport to crisis centers and structure appropriate county participation in behavioral health program governance.

HHS-2: Seek increased state funding to support access to early childhood education.

HHS-3: Support increased funding and legislation to strengthen adult protective services.

Guiding Principles

- The Association supports county, regional and state collaboration to improve agency automation and simplify programs, to streamline administration and to improve client interaction.
- The Association opposes earmarking of block grant funds, and supports increased funding for mandated services, provided the increases do not require additional county expenditures.
- Counties must be actively engaged in setting health and human services policy and program requirements. Programs should be flexible and recognize the state's changing demographics.
- Health and human services programs should encourage responsible behavior and should be targeted to those citizens least able to care for themselves. They should encourage families to be responsible supporters of their children and help individuals find sustainable, long-term employment.
- The State should take the lead in financing, implementing, maintaining, and supporting statewide automated systems; automation efforts undertaken by the State should connect and integrate with county automation initiatives.
- ~~Members of county human service agency boards should be appointed by the boards of county commissioners.~~



Justice and Public Safety

Approved Goals

JPS-1: Support legislation and funding to raise the Age of Juvenile Jurisdiction from 16 to 18 with the exception of felony crimes.

JPS-2: Support increased state funding for NC courts, including reinstating funding for drug treatment court.

JPS-3: Support legislation and state funding to provide early intervention services through the Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils, and support increased state funding for the prevention, intervention and treatment of adolescent substance abuse, gang involvement and domestic violence.

Guiding Principles

The statewide judicial system, including effective ancillary services and programs, should be adequately funded and staffed in order to provide an efficient environment for judicial process and to instill public confidence in the justice system.

- Adjudication should be swift, in order to minimize overcrowding in county jails.
- Bonds should be reasonable, and effective pre-trial screening and population management efforts should be encouraged.
- ~~Criminals should be held accountable and required to pay a greater portion of the State and county costs resulting from their crimes through increased jail fees, service of process fees, and court facilities fees.~~

~~Offenders should be held accountable to society and required to pay a proportionate share of the fees resulting from their offenses, including fees to counties~~

- Effective prevention programs, alternatives to incarcerations and other related services should be supported in an effort to help reduce recidivism rates and lower county jail costs.



Public Education

Approved Goals

PE-1: Seek legislation to establish a new state-county partnership to address statewide public school capital challenges--including but not limited to maintenance, renovation, construction and debt--through a dedicated, stable funding stream that is consistent from county to county and sufficient to meet the school facility needs of all 100 counties.

PE-2: Support legislation to repeal the statutory authority under N.C. Gen. Stat. 115C-431(c) that allows a local school board to file suit against a county board of commissioners over county appropriations for education.

PE-3: Support legislation to provide for an overall increase of funding based on average daily memberships outside of the current formula system.

Guiding Principles

- The Association supports efforts to clarify State and county responsibility through legislation that recognizes the following:
 - the impact of changing technologies on basic educational needs and the job market of the future;
 - the impact of any changes on the facility needs of local school systems;
 - the need for county commissioners to have the authority to make sure funds appropriated for school facility needs are used accordingly; and
 - the challenges faced by counties, especially those near metropolitan areas, in balancing growth in school populations with stagnant county revenues.
- Taxing authority for local public education should be vested exclusively with boards of county commissioners.
- The State should define and support an adequate sound basic education in all local school systems and should appropriate adequate operating revenue to fully fund its education initiatives.
- Effective classroom technologies and innovations provide greater choice, improve education, and should be available to all public schools and community colleges.
- North Carolina's community colleges are critical components of the state's integrated efforts to prepare youth and adults for constructive participation in a constantly changing economy.



Tax and Finance

Approved Goals

TF-1: Support efforts to preserve and expand the existing local revenue base of counties, and oppose efforts to divert to the state fees or taxes currently allocated to the counties to the state. Oppose efforts to erode existing county revenue streams and authorize local option revenue sources already given to any other jurisdiction.

TF-2: Support legislation to grow North Carolina's statewide economy through sound state investments, including public infrastructure funding, competitive incentives, and coordinated efforts with county economic development services.

TF-3: Support legislation to restore state aid funding of public libraries to the pre-2011 level of \$15.7 million and eliminate special provisions that distribute state aid outside of the equitable formula developed by the State Library Commission.

Guiding Principles

- The county revenue base should be broad and balanced, with authority to raise revenues from various sources, rather than being overly reliant on any single revenue source or overly burdensome on any 1 group of taxpayers.
- The Association opposes the redistribution of existing local revenues; distribution of new tax sources should assess local needs, local funding efforts, and local funding capability.
- Any restructuring of county responsibilities should include restructuring of local revenue sources to meet those responsibilities.
- Counties should have the authority to generate optional revenues to meet public service needs, while being responsive to economic change.
- If statewide policy objectives result in reductions in local tax bases, the Legislature should reimburse county and municipal losses from State sources.
- Existing local revenue base exemptions and exclusions should be evaluated to see whether they have achieved the intended tax policy objectives. New or extended exemptions and exclusions should include a "sunset" date in their authorizing legislation.
- **The Association opposes unfunded mandates and shifts of state responsibilities to counties.**



Legislative Goals Committee Priorities

Top 7 Goals

- 1.) **HHS-1:** Support increased state funding for behavioral health services and facilities at the state and local level, including dedicated resources for community paramedicine projects. Support Medicaid reimbursement to EMS for behavioral health transport to crisis centers and structure appropriate county participation in behavioral health program governance.
- 2.) **PE-1:** Seek legislation to establish a new state-county partnership to address statewide public school capital challenges--including but not limited to maintenance, renovation, construction and debt--through a dedicated, stable funding stream that is consistent from county to county and sufficient to meet the school facility needs of all 100 counties.
- 3.) **GG-1:** Support increased state funding for transportation construction and maintenance needs, and support legislation to ensure that the STI funding formula recognizes that one size does not fit all and that projects in both rural and urban areas are prioritized and funded.
- 4.) **TF-1:** Support efforts to preserve and expand the existing local revenue base of counties, and oppose efforts to divert to the state fees or taxes currently allocated to the counties to the state. Oppose efforts to erode existing county revenue streams and authorize local option revenue sources already given to any other jurisdiction.
- 5.) **JPS-1:** Support legislation and funding to raise the Age of Juvenile Jurisdiction from 16 to 18 with the exception of felony crimes
- 6.) **TF-2:** Support legislation to grow North Carolina's statewide economy through sound state investments, including public infrastructure funding, competitive incentives, and coordinated efforts with county economic development services.
- 7.) **PE-2:** Support legislation to repeal the statutory authority under N.C. Gen. Stat. 115C-431(c) that allows a local school board to file suit against a county board of commissioners over county appropriations for education.