

Article 2B.

Public Transportation.

§ 136-44.20. Department of Transportation designated agency to administer and fund public transportation programs; authority of political subdivisions.

(a) The Department of Transportation is hereby designated as the agency of the State of North Carolina responsible for administering all federal and/or State programs relating to public transportation; and the Department is hereby granted authority to do all things required under applicable federal and/or State legislation to administer properly public transportation programs within North Carolina. Such authority shall include, but shall not be limited to, the power to receive federal funds and distribute federal and State financial assistance for inter-city rail or bus passenger service crossing one or more county lines.

(b) The Department of Transportation, upon approval by the Board of Transportation, is authorized to provide the matching share of federal public transportation assistance programs through private resources, local government funds, or State appropriations provided by the General Assembly.

(b1) The Secretary may, subject to the appropriations made by the General Assembly for any fiscal year, enter into State Full Funding Grant Agreements with a Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) duly created and existing pursuant to Article 26 of Chapter 160A, a Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) duly created and existing pursuant to Article 27 of Chapter 160A, or a city organized under the laws of this State as defined in G.S. 160A-1(2), to provide State matching funds for "new start" fixed guideway projects in development by any entity pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 5309. These grant agreements shall be executable only upon an Authority's or city's completion of and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approval of Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Impact Studies in anticipation of federal funding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 5309.

Prior to executing State Full Funding Grant Agreements, the Secretary shall submit proposed grant agreements or amendments to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee for review. The agreements, consistent with federal guidance, shall define the limits of the "new starts" projects within the State, commit maximum levels of State financial participation, and establish terms and conditions of State financial participation.

State Full Funding Grant Agreements may provide for contribution of State funds in multiyear allotments. The multiyear allotments shall be based upon the Department's estimates, made in conjunction with an Authority or city, of the grant amount required for "new start" project work to be performed in the appropriation fiscal year.

State funds may be used to fund fixed guideway projects developed without federal funding by the Department, a Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) duly created and existing pursuant to Article 26 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, a Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) duly created and existing pursuant to Article 27 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, or a unit of local government. In addition, State funds may be used to pay administrative costs incurred by the Department while participating in such fixed guideway projects.

(c) Nothing herein shall be construed to prevent a political subdivision of the State of North Carolina from applying for and receiving direct assistance from the United States government under the provisions of any applicable legislation.

(d) Repealed by Session Laws 2011-145, s. 28.12, effective July 1, 2011.

(e) The Department of Transportation is authorized to annually allocate funds to qualifying public transportation systems to be used to consolidate or coordinate with other public transportation systems to maximize resources, gain efficiencies, and increase access to public transportation. In order to be eligible for funding under this subsection, a public

transportation system must submit a plan for consolidation or coordination with another public transportation system. The plan must include a time line for completion and an estimated cost for completion. The Department is not required to provide the full amount of the estimated cost identified in the plan. The Department shall disburse the funds no later than 30 days from the date it approves the plan. The amount allocated under this subsection to a public transportation system shall not exceed two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) annually. Beginning December 1, 2017, the Department shall provide an annual report to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee identifying for the year preceding the report (i) each public transportation system provided funding under this subsection, (ii) the amount of funds disbursed to each public transportation system, and (iii) the purpose or purposes for which each public transportation system has used the funds. (1975, c. 451; 1977, c. 341, s. 2; 1983, c. 616; 1989, c. 692, s. 2.3; c. 700, s. 1; 1993, c. 488, s. 2; 2000-67, s. 25.7; 2009-409, s. 1; 2011-145, s. 28.12; 2017-57, s. 34.18A.)