Disaster Relief

See full summary documents for additional detail

Interest to Support North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Efforts – State Fiscal Recovery Funds/North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office Revisions.

SL 2026-3 (H433), Sec. 3

Section 3 of S.L. 2026-3 (House Bill 433) specifies that interest earned on certain funds, from the following, is appropriated to the Office of State Budget and Management for operations pertaining to pandemic recovery: the Local Fiscal Recovery Fund; the Homeowner Assistance Fund; the Economic Development Assistance Strategy and Tourism grant funds; and the Project Fund.

This section became effective May 12, 2026.

North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office/Extension of Operations – State Fiscal Recovery Funds/North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office Revisions.

SL 2026-3 (H433), Sec. 4

Section 4 of S.L. 2026-3 (House Bill 433) does the following:

- Extends the North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office (NCPRO) authority through May 1, 2027, when the United States Treasury closeout of State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) will be finalized.
- Requires that no later than one week prior to the date it ceases to operate, the NCPRO submit a final report to the Fiscal Research Division and the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations regarding NCPRO activities and its use of funds. The final report must include the following:
    - For each month since March 1, 2020, the number of staff hired to support the NCPRO duties and responsibilities, including the position numbers, whether the position is permanent or temporary, the start date and end date for each temporary position, the funding source for each position, and the total amount of funds spent on salary and benefits for personnel.
    - For each month since March 1, 2020, an accounting of nonpersonnel expenditures.
    - A description of the NCPRO activities during the 2026 calendar year.
    - A description of the NCPRO activities related to the Fund, including any funding returned to the United States Treasury.

The section became effective on May 12, 2026.

Agricultural Water Plan Update. – NC Farm Act of 2025-2026.

SL 2026-11 (S401), Sec. 1

Section 1 of S.L. 2026-11 (Senate Bill 401) directs Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) to update the Strategic Plan for Protecting Agricultural Water Resources in North Carolina (Plan) to include information on water infrastructure needs, water conservation practices, cost share assistance needed for long term water storage capacity and conservation practices, and flooding mitigation practices and incentive programs.

DACS must submit a report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources by January 1, 2027, on the development of the Plan and any legislative changes needed to implement the Plan.

This section became effective June 22, 2026.

Temporary Relocation Assistance Program – 2026 Appropriations Act.

SL 2026-41 (S257), Sec. 5A.7

Section 5A.7 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) establishes the Temporary Relocation Assistance Program (Program) within the Department of Commerce's Division of Community Revitalization (DCR). The Program provides for housing assistance funds to any eligible person still working to regain permanent housing after Hurricane Helene. To be eligible, applicants for the Program must already be enrolled in Phase 1 or 2 of the Renew NC Program for home rebuilding, restoration, and construction or otherwise be at 80% of the area's median income. Applicants must also submit a standardized request form, sign a grant agreement, and demonstrate that the applicant has exhausted all other options for housing and has experienced a hardship, like job loss, business failure, severe medical illness or disability, or substantial income reduction.

DCR must require home builders, long-term recovery groups, and vendors involved in the Program to find appropriate housing for enrolled families, and DCR must pay the home builder for approved payments at the time construction costs are paid. Home builders are responsible for cost overages, liability for damages, and may be subject to liquidated damages for failing to meet Program timelines.

Standard Program durations are 81 days for rehabilitation or replacement, and 171 days for reconstruction.

DCR must report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources and the Fiscal Research Division on the Program's implementation no later than September 1, 2026, and every six months thereafter until the Program has terminated.

Section 5A.2(d) of this act appropriated $20 million to NC Emergency Management that may be used by DCR for cashflow needs for the program, and $40 million to the Department of Commerce for use by the Program.

This section became effective July 1, 2026.

Disaster Mitigation/Resiliency Allocation to Repair Damages and Close Out NC Office of Recovery and Resiliency Cashflow Loan Program – 2026 Appropriations Act.

SL 2026-41 (S257), Sec. 5A.11

Section 5A.11 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257), as amended by Section 1.2 of S.L. 2026-42 (House Bill 56), does the following:

- Directs the State Controller to transfer $4.5 million to the Office of State Budget and Management for the Town of Fair Bluff for the riverwalk project that was destroyed.
- Requires that any funds remaining in the NC Office of Recovery & Resiliency cashflow loan program revert to the Savings Reserve upon the closure of the program.
- Requires the Office of State Budget and Management to submit a report on the closeout of the cashflow loan program to the Joint Legislative Emergency Management Oversight Committee and Fiscal Research Division within six months of the closure of the program.

This section became effective on July 1, 2026.

Hotel Safety Act Modifications – 2026 Appropriations Act.

SL 2026-41 (S257), Sec. 5A.17

Section 5A.17 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) requires innkeepers to provide suitable lodging accommodations for persons who are accepted as guests in an "emergency or disaster declared occupancy."

The section defines "emergency or disaster declared occupancy" as the rental of an accommodation such as an apartment, inn, hotel, motel, recreational vehicle park, campground, or similar lodging to the same guest or occupant who meets all of the following criteria:

- The guest or occupant is renting the accommodation because of one of the following:
  - An emergency declared by the Governor or the General Assembly.
  - A disaster declared by the Governor.
  - A major disaster declared by the President of the United States.
- The guest or occupant is a recipient of Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery assistance and is renting the accommodation during the repair or reconstruction of the guest's or occupant's home through a program administered by the Department of Commerce.

This section became effective July 1, 2026.

Emergency Sheltering/Storage Space Procurement Flexibility – 2026 Appropriations Act.

SL 2026-41 (S257), Sec. 5A.18

Section 5A.18 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) amends the powers of the Division of Emergency Management (Division), of the Department of Public Safety, to authorize the Division to contract for services from vendors specializing in emergency sheltering and storage spaces.

This section became effective July 1, 2026.

Hazard Mitigation Liability – 2026 Appropriations Act.

SL 2026-41 (S257), Sec. 5A.19

Section 5A.19 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) expands authority of and provides broad liability protections to any entity providing emergency management services, including to nonprofit entities, that acquire and manage real property for the purposes of hazard risk management, provided that the real property is held consistent with all applicable legal requirements.

This section became retroactively effective January 1, 2025, and applies to causes of action arising on or after that date.

First Responder Modification. – 2026 Appropriations Act.

SL 2026-41 (S257), Sec. 5A.20

Section 5A.20 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) adds water and wastewater utility professionals to the list of first responders who may be deployed to disaster locations eligible for participation in a vaccination program administered by the Department of Health and Human Services and local health departments.

This section became effective July 1, 2026.

Disaster Reimbursement Reports – 2026 Appropriations Act.

SL 2026-41 (S257), Sec. 43.3

Section 43.3 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to submit a detailed report to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee and the Fiscal Research Division on disaster expenditures that qualify for federal reimbursement. This report is due no later than the end of each month.

No later than the end of each quarter, DOT must submit a summary report to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee and the Fiscal Research Division for all disaster expenditures resulting from a disaster that occurred on or after January 1, 2016, and that qualify for federal reimbursement.

If DOT fails to submit either report within 60 days of the required submission date, the Secretary of DOT must provide an explanation for not submitting the report to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations and the Fiscal Research Division.

This section became effective July 1, 2026.

Private Road and Bridge Program Modification – Regulatory Reform Act of 2026.

SL 2026-59 (S445), Sec. 17.5

The Private Road and Bridge Repair and Replacement Program (Program) was established in Part II-C of S.L. 2025-2 within the Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management (NCEM), to assist with the repair and replacement of private roads and bridges damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Helene.

Section 17.5 of S.L. 2026-59 (Senate Bill 445) directs NCEM to develop a private bridge design standard no later than October 10, 2026. This section further amends the Program to allow for qualified design-build delivery of certain low-cost private bridges in conjunction with a licensed general contractor and professional engineer.

This section is retroactively effective July 1, 2026.

Allow Liquefied Petroleum Gas Refills During Emergencies. – Regulatory Reform Act of 2026.

SL 2026-59 (S445), Sec. 26

Section 26 of S.L. 2026-59 (Senate Bill 445) provides a limited exception to the prohibition of disconnecting, interrupting or filling a liquified petroleum (LP) gas tank or system without supplier's consent, that allows a licensed LP gas dealer other than the owner or supplier of an LP gas tank or system (emergency supplier) to refill a customer's LP gas tank during qualifying emergencies. During a qualifying emergency, the emergency supplier may fill or refill the system's tanks with LP gas provided conditions, like limited supply, good faith efforts to procure delivery and obtain consent from the current supplier, temporary tags, and notification upon fill, are met.

This section also creates a de minimis exception for tanks or containers with a capacity less than 5 gallons, requires a tag, label, or other marking attached to the tank or container to include the name of the tank or container owner, requires a leak test when a new supplier takes over regular service for filling the tank or container, increases civil and criminal penalties for violations, and provides limited liability protections for emergency suppliers acting pursuant to the qualifying emergency refill exception.

This section also provides that the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services can only issue warnings for the failure of a supplier to either attach the required tag, label, or other

marking to the tank or container that includes the owner's name or conduct a leak test. The authority to issue warnings for violations expires December 1, 2027.

This section becomes effective December 1, 2026, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date.

Toll Discontinuance Period for Vested Rights During Emergency Declarations. – Regulatory Reform Act of 2026.

SL 2026-59 (S445), Sec. 42

A vested right to complete a project granted by the issuance of a development permit expires for an uncompleted development project if the development work is intentionally and voluntarily discontinued for 24 months. The discontinuance period is tolled during (i) the pendency of any board of adjustment proceeding or civil action in a State or federal trial or appellate court regarding the validity of a development permit, the use of the property, or the existence of the statutory vesting period, and (ii) the pendency of any litigation involving the development project or property that is the subject of the vesting.

Section 42 of S.L. 2026-59 (Senate Bill 445) also tolls the discontinuance period for the duration of an emergency declaration for which the defined emergency includes some or all of the property under development.

This section became effective August 11, 2026.