

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009

H

2

HOUSE BILL 1745*
Committee Substitute Favorable 5/26/10

Short Title: Survey Ag. Water Infrastructure Needs.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

May 18, 2010

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER
2 SERVICES AND THE DIVISION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION OF THE
3 DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONTINUE
4 TO WORK WITH THE NORTH CAROLINA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, OTHER
5 AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND FARMERS IN THE STATE TO
6 DEVELOP A PLAN TO IDENTIFY AND REPORT AGRICULTURAL WATER
7 INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE LEGISLATIVE STUDY
8 COMMISSION ON WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE.

9
10 Whereas, North Carolina recognizes that water is our most basic and precious
11 natural resource; and

12 Whereas, North Carolina has experienced several years of extreme drought over the
13 past decade and will likely continue to experience extreme drought in the future; and

14 Whereas, North Carolina should identify and promote best management practices
15 and leadership efforts in water efficiency and water conservation; and

16 Whereas, agriculture is one of the largest industries in the State, with an annual
17 economic impact of over \$70 billion each year and employing over 640,000 people; and

18 Whereas, agriculture suffers acutely from the effects of water scarcity and drought,
19 while at the same time playing an important role in the sustainable management of available
20 water resources; and

21 Whereas, the United States Environmental Protection Agency conducts an
22 assessment of the national public water system capital improvement needs every four years as
23 part of its Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment, but this survey does
24 not consider agricultural water infrastructure needs; and

25 Whereas, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, in conjunction
26 with the Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the Department of Environment and
27 Natural Resources, the North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation, other agricultural
28 organizations, and farmers are currently in the process of developing a strategic plan for
29 protecting agricultural water resources; Now, therefore,

30 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

31 **SECTION 1.** The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the
32 Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the Department of Environment and Natural
33 Resources shall continue to work with the North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation, other
34 agricultural organizations, and farmers to develop a plan that will identify agricultural water
35 infrastructure needs that are not accounted for in the surveys of water infrastructure needs
36 conducted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The plan shall include the
37 following:



- 1 (1) A mechanism for reporting the results of the data gathered to the General
2 Assembly in a manner that is helpful in assessing legislative and budgetary
3 issues that the General Assembly may need to address.
4 (2) Methods to identify current and future agricultural water use needs and
5 methods to ensure that those needs are met.
6 (3) Methods to identify best management practices for water conservation and
7 water efficiency by agricultural water users in the State.
8 (4) A schedule to update the plan on a regular basis.

9 **SECTION 2.** The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the
10 Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the Department of Environment and Natural
11 Resources shall report to the Legislative Study Commission on Water and Wastewater
12 Infrastructure by November 1, 2010, regarding the development of the plan, the proposed
13 methodology and time frame for implementing the plan, the estimated cost of the plan, and any
14 legislative changes needed to implement the plan.

15 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.