

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1999

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HOUSE BILL 1557\*  
Committee Substitute Favorable 5/26/00  
Third Edition Engrossed 6/6/00

Short Title: DOT Establish Rural Planning Orgs.

(Public)

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Sponsors:

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Referred to:

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May 17, 2000

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, IN  
3 COOPERATION WITH LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS, TO ESTABLISH RURAL  
4 TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS TO PLAN RURAL  
5 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS AND TO ADVISE THE DEPARTMENT ON  
6 RURAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY.

7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8 Section 1. G.S. 136-18 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

9 "(35) To establish rural planning organizations, as provided in Article 17 of  
10 this Chapter."

11 Section 2. Chapter 136 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new  
12 Article to read:

13 **"ARTICLE 17.**

14 **"RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS.**

15 **"§ 136-210. Definitions.**

16 As used in this Article, 'Rural Transportation Planning Organization' means a  
17 voluntary organization of local elected officials or their designees and representatives of  
18 local transportation systems formed by a memorandum of understanding with the

1 Department of Transportation to work cooperatively with the Department to plan rural  
2 transportation systems and to advise the Department on rural transportation policy.

3 **"§ 136-211. Department authorized to establish Rural Public Transportation**  
4 **Planning Organizations.**

5 (a) Authorization. – The Department of Transportation is authorized to form Rural  
6 Transportation Planning Organizations.

7 (b) Area Represented. – Rural Transportation Planning Organizations shall include  
8 representatives from contiguous areas in three to fifteen counties, with a total population  
9 of the entire area represented of at least 50,000 persons according to the latest population  
10 estimate of the Office of State Planning. Areas already included in a Metropolitan  
11 Planning Organization shall not be included in the area represented by a Rural Planning  
12 Organization.

13 (c) Membership. – The Rural Transportation Planning Organization shall consist  
14 of local elected officials or their designees and representatives of local transportation  
15 systems in the area as agreed to by all parties in a memorandum of understanding.

16 (d) Formation; Memorandum of Understanding. – The Department shall notify  
17 local elected officials and representatives of local transportation systems around the State  
18 of the opportunity to form Rural Transportation Planning Organizations. The Department  
19 shall work cooperatively with interested local elected officials, their designees, and  
20 representatives of local transportation systems to develop a proposed area, membership,  
21 functions, and responsibilities of a Rural Transportation Planning Organization. The  
22 agreement of all parties shall be included in a memorandum of understanding approved  
23 by the membership of a proposed Rural Transportation Planning Organization and the  
24 Secretary of the Department of Transportation.

25 **"§ 136-212. Duties of Rural Transportation Planning Organizations.**

26 The duties of a Rural Transportation Planning Organization shall include, but not be  
27 limited to:

- 28 (1) Developing, in cooperation with the Department, long-range local and  
29 regional multimodal transportation plans.
- 30 (2) Providing a forum for public participation in the transportation planning  
31 process.
- 32 (3) Developing and prioritizing suggestions for transportation projects the  
33 organization believes should be included in the State's Transportation  
34 Improvement Program.
- 35 (4) Providing transportation-related information to local governments and  
36 other interested organizations and persons.

37 **"§ 136-213. Administration and staff.**

38 (a) Administrative Entity. – Each Rural Transportation Planning Organization,  
39 working in cooperation with the Department, shall select an appropriate administrative  
40 entity for the organization. Eligible administrative entities include, but are not limited to,  
41 regional economic development agencies, regional councils of government, chambers of  
42 commerce, and local governments.

1       **(b) Professional Staff.** – The Department and each Rural Transportation Planning  
2 Organization shall cooperatively determine the appropriate professional planning staff  
3 needs of the organization.

4       **(c) Funding.** – If funds are appropriated for that purpose, the Department may  
5 make grants to Rural Transportation Planning Organizations for professional planning  
6 staff. The members of the Rural Transportation Planning Organization shall contribute at  
7 least twenty percent (20%) of the cost of any staff resources employed by the  
8 organization. The Department may make additional planning grants to economically  
9 distressed counties, as designated by the North Carolina Department of Commerce."

10           Section 3. Nothing in this act shall require the General Assembly to  
11 appropriate funds to implement it. Neither the Department of Transportation nor the  
12 General Assembly shall reallocate any road maintenance funds to implement this act.

13           Section 4. The Department shall report to the Joint Legislative Transportation  
14 Oversight Committee on the implementation of this act on or before December 1, 2000.

15           Section 5. This act becomes effective July 1, 2000.