

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 Transportation Planning**
4 **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
12 Transportation Planning 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, each Rural Transportation Planning
2 Organization, and any adjacent Metropolitan Planning Organization shall cooperatively
3 determine the appropriate professional planning staff 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.

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

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