

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003**

H

1

HOUSE BILL 1362*

Short Title: Southern Appalachian Science & Tech Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Walend.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

May 11, 2004

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN
2 SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY CENTER (SASTC) LOCATED IN POLK
3 COUNTY.
4

5 Whereas, North Carolina's mountain counties have undergone significant
6 economic upheaval due to the decline of the region's traditional manufacturing
7 industries; and

8 Whereas, Polk County is among the many counties in North Carolina that has
9 lost jobs as a result of textile mill closings; and

10 Whereas, the region's future economic vitality relies on its ability to spawn,
11 foster, and attract entrepreneurial ventures in emerging technologies and scientific
12 disciplines; and

13 Whereas, the ability of North Carolina's academic institutions west of the
14 Research Triangle to conduct effective and successful technology maturation and
15 commercialization remains limited by lack of resources and barriers to collaboration;
16 and

17 Whereas, North Carolina's Rural Internet Access Authority provided e-Polk a
18 grant in the amount of \$375,000 for the installation of OC3-capacity Internet
19 infrastructure access critical to the economic development of the area; and

20 Whereas, now that Polk County has world-class Internet capacity in place, a
21 local group of visionaries has created The Southern Appalachian Science & Technology
22 Center (SASTC) to build upon the foresight of the State and bring new jobs to the area;
23 and

24 Whereas, SASTC has a multipurpose vision for supporting innovation, the
25 management of intellectual property, and commercialization of technology in a variety
26 of cutting-edge fields including nanotechnology, biotechnology, and materials science;
27 and

1 Whereas, SASTC was incorporated as a nonprofit on October 24, 2003, with
2 bylaws specifying that a plan be developed for financial self-sufficiency through
3 membership support after its first 24 months of operation; and

4 Whereas, Polk County, the Town of Tryon, and Advantage West have all
5 provided support in the form of financial assistance or in-kind services for SASTC's
6 initial strategic planning efforts; and

7 Whereas, SASTC is uniquely positioned to coordinate interagency
8 cooperation, and the geography of Polk County is very advantageous relative to
9 universities in the eight State regions already conducting technology research; and

10 Whereas, through its collaboration with Western Carolina University, the
11 University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and other institutions from the Piedmont and
12 Triad, North Carolina will benefit economically from SASTC's initial efforts; and

13 Whereas, SASTC holds substantial and compelling promise for the economic
14 reinvention and growth of North Carolina's mountain region; Now, therefore,

15 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

16 **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to The Southern
17 Appalachian Science & Technology Center, Inc., a nonprofit organization located in
18 Polk County, the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) for the
19 2004-2005 fiscal year for operating expenses. This sum will also serve as matching
20 funds and leverage to secure targeted additional support from federal agencies and
21 private foundations to advance the SASTC vision.

22 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2004.