

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2017

S

1

SENATE BILL 637*

Short Title: Small Farms to Healthier Schools Initiative. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Bryant (Primary Sponsor); Foushee, J. Jackson, Smith-Ingram, Waddell, and Woodard.

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

April 5, 2017

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THE SMALL FARMS TO HEALTHIER
2 SCHOOLS INITIATIVE, A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL NUTRITION
3 PROGRAMS AND LOCAL FARMERS.
4

5 Whereas, overweight children are at greater risk for numerous adverse health
6 consequences, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, high
7 cholesterol, certain cancers, asthma, low self-esteem, depression, and other debilitating
8 diseases; and

9 Whereas, in North Carolina, over thirty-one percent (31%) of children were
10 considered overweight or obese, and obese children are at least twice as likely as non-obese
11 children to become obese adults; and

12 Whereas, the medical costs of obesity are rising rapidly in the United States and are
13 estimated to be one hundred forty-seven billion dollars (\$147,000,000,000) per year, with
14 roughly half of these obesity-related costs paid by Medicare and Medicaid, indicating taxpayers
15 bear the majority of the cost for obesity-related medical care; and

16 Whereas, many American children, particularly those in low-income
17 neighborhoods, rural areas, and communities of color, live in communities that lack adequate
18 access to stores selling nutritious foods; and

19 Whereas, in these neighborhoods, the school nutrition program often provides the
20 only source of healthier foods for these children; and

21 Whereas, though North Carolina's school districts spend approximately two hundred
22 eighty-five million dollars (\$285,000,000) annually on purchases of food, small farmers
23 struggle to access this market for their products, accounting for less than one percent (1%) of
24 those purchases; Now, therefore,

25 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

26 **SECTION 1.(a)** The sum of three hundred forty thousand dollars (\$340,000) in
27 nonrecurring funds for the 2017-2018 fiscal year and three hundred thirty thousand dollars
28 (\$330,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2018-2019 fiscal year are appropriated from the
29 General Fund to Working Landscapes, a nonprofit organization based in Warren County for a
30 pilot program to reimburse participating school districts based on the servings of food they
31 source from farms within the same region. The pilot project will take place in the educational
32 district for the North Central region as provided in G.S. 143B-28.1 (Chatham, Durham,
33 Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Harnett, Johnston, Lee, Nash, Orange, Person, Vance, Wake,
34 Warren, and Wilson Counties).



1 **SECTION 1.(b)** Of the funds appropriated by this act, sixty thousand dollars
2 (\$60,000) in fiscal year 2017-2018 and one hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$120,000) in
3 fiscal year 2018-2019 shall be used for payments to participating school systems to offset the
4 higher cost of locally grown products. The remaining funds in each fiscal year shall be
5 cost-shared on a one-to-one basis with funds provided by Working Landscapes and shall be
6 used to establish program infrastructure and assist local farms in obtaining certifications
7 necessary to supply school nutrition programs.

8 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2017.