

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2021

FILED SENATE  
Apr 6, 2021  
S.B. 628  
PRINCIPAL CLERK

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SENATE BILL DRS45353-MW-28

Short Title: Native Plants Right to Work Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Rabon and McInnis (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE USE OF NATIVE NORTH CAROLINA PLANTS AND SEEDS  
3 ON STATE PROPERTY AND HIGHWAYS AND ON LOCAL PROJECTS THAT USE  
4 STATE FUNDS FOR LANDSCAPING.

5 Whereas, native plants are an important part of North Carolina's natural heritage,  
6 history, and identity; and

7 Whereas, North Carolina's native plants are indigenous plants that have adapted over  
8 many years to our region and evolved to flourish in the unique geography, hydrology, and  
9 microclimates of our State; and

10 Whereas, North Carolina contains over 3,900 native plant species, making North  
11 Carolina one of the most diverse states for flora in the Southeast; and

12 Whereas, twenty-six of those species are extremely rare and considered federally  
13 threatened or endangered; and

14 Whereas, native plants provide high-quality food and shelter for North Carolina's  
15 native wildlife, including butterflies, bees, and other pollinators, both game and nongame  
16 species; and

17 Whereas, native plants support over 350 resident and migratory bird species in North  
18 Carolina, many of which are species of concern and face growing threats from climate change;  
19 and

20 Whereas, North Carolina's native plants and their derivatives have provided foods,  
21 medicines, and other products, from the origin of North Carolina's blueberry industry to  
22 American ginseng exports; and

23 Whereas, gardens and landscapes composed of North Carolina's native plants require  
24 little or no fertilizers, soil amendments, or pesticides and use less water; and

25 Whereas, planting, cultivation, and preservation of the State's native plants provide a  
26 natural link to wild land areas present and past, while presenting beauty and benefit and instilling  
27 a greater appreciation for North Carolina's natural heritage; Now, therefore,

28 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

29  
30 **DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION SHALL REQUIRE THE USE OF NORTH**  
31 **CAROLINA PLANTS ON STATE PROPERTY**

32 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 143-341 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

33 "(12) In consultation with university system and community college horticulture  
34 programs and the North Carolina Forestry Association, the Department of  
35 Administration shall require the use of seeds and plants the U.S. Department  
36 of Agriculture has classified as native to North Carolina on all land owned or



1 leased by the State or by any State agency. Exempt from this requirement are  
2 (i) nonnative seeds and plants used in landscaping for locations where the  
3 primary purpose is crop cultivation, crop and horticulture research, science,  
4 botanical gardens, and zoos and (ii) nonnative turf grass."  
5

6 **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SHALL USE NORTH CAROLINA PLANTS**  
7 **IN HIGHWAY RIGHT-OF-WAY**

8 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 136-18(9) reads as rewritten:

9 "(9) ~~To employ appropriate means for properly selecting, planting, and protecting~~  
10 ~~acceptable trees, shrubs, vines, grasses, or legumes~~ In consultation with  
11 university system and community college horticulture programs and the North  
12 Carolina Forestry Association, the Department shall use seeds and plants the  
13 U.S. Department of Agriculture has classified as native to North Carolina in  
14 the highway right-of-way in the promotion of erosion control, landscaping,  
15 and general protection of the highways; to acquire by gift or otherwise land  
16 for and to construct, operate, and maintain roadside parks, picnic areas, picnic  
17 tables, scenic overlooks, and other appropriate turnouts for the safety and  
18 convenience of highway users; and to cooperate with municipal or county  
19 authorities, federal agencies, civic bodies, and individuals in the furtherance  
20 of those objectives. For purposes of this subdivision, the term "acceptable"  
21 means plants the Department of Transportation determines will maintain a  
22 stable and aesthetic roadside, with a strong preference for using plants the U.S.  
23 Department of Agriculture has classified as native to North Carolina. None of  
24 the roadside parks, picnic areas, picnic tables, scenic overlooks, or other  
25 turnouts, or any part of the highway right-of-way shall be used for commercial  
26 purposes except for any of the following:

- 27 a. Materials displayed in welcome centers in accordance with  
28 G.S. 136-89.56.
- 29 b. Vending machines permitted by the Department of Transportation and  
30 placed by the Division of Services for the Blind of the Department of  
31 Health and Human Services, as the State licensing agency designated  
32 pursuant to Section 2(a)(5) of the Randolph-Sheppard Act (20 U.S.C.  
33 107a(a)(5)). The Department of Transportation shall regulate the  
34 placing of the vending machines in highway rest areas and shall  
35 regulate the articles to be dispensed.
- 36 c. Activities permitted by a local government pursuant to an ordinance  
37 meeting the requirements of G.S. 136-27.4.

38 Every other use or attempted use of any of these areas for commercial  
39 purposes constitutes a Class 1 misdemeanor, and each day's use constitutes a  
40 separate offense."  
41

42 **CITIES AND TOWNS SHALL USE NORTH CAROLINA PLANTS WHEN POWELL**  
43 **BILL FUNDS ARE USED FOR LANDSCAPING**

44 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 136-41.3(a) reads as rewritten:

45 "(a) Uses of Funds. – Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the funds allocated  
46 to cities and towns under the provisions of G.S. 136-41.1 and G.S. 136-41.2 shall be expended  
47 by said cities and towns primarily for the resurfacing of streets within the corporate limits of the  
48 municipality but may also be used for the purposes of maintaining, repairing, constructing,  
49 reconstructing or widening of any street or public thoroughfare including bridges, drainage, curb  
50 and gutter, and other necessary appurtenances within the corporate limits of the municipality or  
51 for meeting the municipality's proportionate share of assessments levied for such purposes, or for

1 the planning, construction and maintenance of bikeways, greenways, or sidewalks. Cities and  
2 towns shall ~~strongly prefer the use of~~ use seeds and plants the U.S. Department of Agriculture  
3 has classified as native to North Carolina when the use of funds under this subsection includes  
4 landscaping. The funds allocated to cities and towns under the provisions of G.S. 136-41.1 and  
5 G.S. 136-41.2 shall not be expended for the construction of a sidewalk into which is built a  
6 mailbox, utility pole, fire hydrant, or other similar obstruction that would impede the clear  
7 passage of pedestrians on the sidewalk."  
8

9 **LOCAL PROJECTS FUNDED UNDER PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND TO**  
10 **USE NORTH CAROLINA PLANTS**

11 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 143B-135.56(b)(2) reads as rewritten:

12 "(2) Thirty percent (30%) to provide matching funds to local governmental units  
13 or public authorities as defined in G.S. 159-7 on a dollar-for-dollar basis for  
14 local park and recreation purposes. The appraised value of land that is donated  
15 to a local government unit or public authority may be applied to the matching  
16 requirement of this subdivision. These funds shall be allocated by the North  
17 Carolina Parks and Recreation Authority based on criteria patterned after the  
18 Open Project Selection Process established for the Land and Water  
19 Conservation Fund administered by the National Park Service of the United  
20 States Department of the Interior. Except as provided below, the Authority  
21 shall require that projects funded under this subdivision use seeds and plants  
22 the U.S. Department of Agriculture has classified as native to North Carolina.  
23 Exempt from this requirement are (i) nonnative seeds and plants used in  
24 landscaping for locations where the primary purpose is crop cultivation, crop  
25 and horticulture research, science, botanical gardens, and zoos and (ii)  
26 nonnative turf grass."  
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28 **EFFECTIVE DATE**

29 **SECTION 5.** This act is effective when it becomes law.