



Topsail Island Shoreline Protection Commission

Legislative Report
April 7, 2025

This week, the Senate elected Senator Michael Lee (R-New Hanover) as their new Majority Leader after the unexpected retirement last week of former Majority Leader Senator Paul Newton, who left to fill the role of General Counsel at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Senator Lee is currently in his fifth term in the Senate and is currently a Senate Appropriations Chair.

Bills were furiously being filed this week in the House as the House public bill filing deadline approached on Thursday. On Wednesday, Speaker of the House Destin Hall announced a short reprieve – he extended the public bill filing deadline to Thursday, April 10. The Senate public bill introduction deadline passed last week.

This week the House considered and approved its permanent rules that will govern activities in the House for the 2025-2026 legislative session. The rules were prepared with input from House Democrats. This session, lawmakers in the House will have one minute on the floor to speak on issues of collective concern. Personal points of privilege will now require a new process. “They will be limited from here on out to one minute in a matter of immediate importance that concerns the House collectively,” House Rules Chairman Rep. John Bell (R-Wayne) said Monday. The new process outlined in House Bill 563 and approved by the Rules Committee will mirror how the U.S. Congress operates. Chairman Bell said the change was necessary because notices and personal accolades, where lawmakers are allowed to speak up to 10 minutes, can “drag out the end of session” to over an hour at times. North Carolina representatives who wish to share statements or give an accolade will now need to go through the Clerk’s Office to sign up for a maximum of 10 minutes of speaking time. Video cameras will be used to record statements. For special occasions, the North Carolina House Speaker will grant flexibility for certain topics that come before the floor.

The House and Senate adjourned on Thursday and will reconvene on Monday, April 7, 2025.

BILLS OF INTEREST

House Bill 666, Wildlife Resources Commission Term Limits, amends the structure of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission by setting all term lengths for Commission members to two years and limiting members to no more than three consecutive terms. The bill also clarifies the appointing authorities and conditions under which Commission members may be removed. Current Commission members whose terms are set to expire in 2027 or 2029 are allowed to serve out the remainder of their current terms. The act becomes effective June 30, 2025.

Introduced by Rep. Moss and referred to the House Rules Committee.

House Bill 738, Restore Wetlands Protections, seeks to reinstate and clarify wetlands protections in North Carolina, effective when it becomes law, by reversing prior legislative changes and amending statutory definitions under GS Chapter 143. Section 1(a) repeals Section 54 of SL 2014-120, and Section 1(b) repeals Section 4.18 of SL 2015-286, undoing previous rollbacks of wetlands regulations. Section 1(c) revises GS 143-212, defining "isolated wetlands" as those confirmed isolated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers before June 22, 2020, or classified as basin wetlands or bogs per the North Carolina Wetland Assessment User Manual (version 4.1, October 2010), excluding man-made stormwater ditches or ponds. It broadens "waters" to include wetlands and any water body in the state, and defines "wetlands" as areas saturated by surface or groundwater supporting adapted vegetation, excluding prior converted cropland, with state-protected wetlands encompassing both federal waters (per 33 C.F.R. § 328.3 and 40 C.F.R. § 230.3) and isolated wetlands.

Introduced by Reps. Harrison, Butler, K. Brown, and Dew, referred to House Rules.

BILL STATUS UPDATES

House Bill 569, PFAS Pollution and Polluter Liability, was referred to the House Agriculture and Environment Committee.

House Bill 570, Responsible Firefighting Foam Management Act, was referred to the House Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery Committee.

Senate Bill 266, Historic Flood Event Bldg. Code Exemption, was referred to the Senate Regulatory Reform Committee.

Senate Bill 639, North Carolina Farm Act of 2025, was referred to the Senate Agriculture, Energy, and Environment Committee.

For more information about legislation described in the legislative reports, feel free to contact us at horton@maynardnexsen.com, dferrell@maynardnexsen.com, criemer@maynardnexsen.com or at (919) 573-7421. Information is also available on the General Assembly's website: www.ncleg.gov.

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