

State Budget Update / Executive Order Signed to Encourage Wind Energy / House Passes Bill to Move Municipal Elections / Other News



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State Budget Update

North Carolina's two year budget impasse continues as the General Assembly remains far from passing a State Budget. After months of talks, Republican legislative leaders announced the first step of the budget process this week: deciding how much money to spend. The Republicans' spending number for 2021-2022 fiscal year is \$25.7 billion, over \$1 billion less than Governor Cooper's proposal.

What difference does that \$1 billion make?

- Republicans spend less mainly because they want to cut corporate taxes and cut personal income taxes that largely benefit the wealthy.
- Governor Cooper's proposal keeps taxes the same which allows for a much larger pay raise for teachers, school employees, state employees, and retirees.

Republican leaders in their press conference this week also announced they would not support Medicaid Expansion or a statewide bond for clean water and education infrastructure, both proposals championed by legislative Democrats and Governor Cooper.

Now that Republican leaders have agreed to a spending number, the State Senate will pass a State Budget over the next few weeks. That spending plan

will then come over to the State House and we will pass a different version. The two chambers will then create a committee to work out the differences and pass a State Budget bill that will go to Governor Cooper for his signature or veto.

[NC Republicans finally agree on next year's spending total](#) - **Associated Press**

[Cooper to lawmakers: Don't forget me, or my veto, on state budget](#) - **WRAL**

Executive Order Signed to Encourage Wind Energy

Governor Roy Cooper this week issued [Executive Order No. 218](#) highlighting North Carolina's commitment to offshore wind power as the state transitions to a clean energy economy. The Executive Order highlights the economic and environmental benefits of offshore wind and directs actions to help North Carolina secure the jobs and economic development associated with the industry's estimated \$140 billion investment over the next 15 years to develop projects from North Carolina up the Atlantic Coast.

The Order establishes offshore wind development goals of 2.8 gigawatts off the North Carolina coast by 2030 and 8.0 GW by 2040. Achieving these goals will power roughly 2.3 million homes by 2040. In addition to creating economic benefits across North Carolina, the development will help achieve the North Carolina Clean Energy Plan goal of a 70% reduction in power sector greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050.

The Order directs the North Carolina Department of Commerce to name a clean energy economic development coordinator and establish the North Carolina Taskforce for Offshore Wind Economic Resource Strategies (NC TOWERS) to ensure offshore wind activities are well coordinated among leadership in relevant agencies.

[Gov. Cooper issues Executive Order requiring North Carolina to ramp up wind energy projects](#) - **NC Policy Watch**

NC House Passes Bill to Move Municipal Elections

Every ten years we have a national census to count how many people are in our country, state, and community. The 2020 count is complete, but the pandemic has delayed county and city level results. There are a lot of consequences to this delay.

One of the consequences is to local elections in cities and towns around the state. Some cities and towns have their elections in odd-numbered years like 2021 and some use districts that are drawn so that population numbers are equal in each district. Ten years of population changes have made the old districts unequal and the census numbers are not ready to draw new districts.

There is no good solution to the problem of not having census numbers on time. It is the kind of problem where every potential solution creates its own set of new problems. Voters deserve representation and public officials who are accountable to them.

Elections should be held at times and places that are good for the voters. Election administrators need time and resources to make sure the elections work smoothly. Finally, we need some uniformity to reduce confusion and save election costs.

Legislators have been working to come up with a solution that makes the best of a bad situation. The final product, [SB 722](#), has the support of the NC League of Municipalities (the group that represents all cities and towns in NC), the State Board of Elections, and has had input from many individual cities. It passed unanimously on a bipartisan vote.

Other News

[Closing Medicaid Coverage Gap Would Help Diverse Group and Narrow Racial Disparities](#) – **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities**

[Cooper plans to create cash drawing to boost coronavirus vaccinations in NC](#) – **WRAL**

[Judge signs order to implement comprehensive Leandro plan; Democratic lawmakers discuss taking action](#) – **EdNC**

[Scramble For Teachers Continues As Massive NC Summer School Effort Begins](#) – **WUNC**

[The big change coming to NC healthcare that most people don't know about](#) –
NC Policy Watch

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