

*****SPAM*** Latest Updates from the NCGA**



From Sen. Natasha Marcus <natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov>
Date 2023-07-14 14:00



NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

July 14, 2023

Governor's Vetoes and Overrides

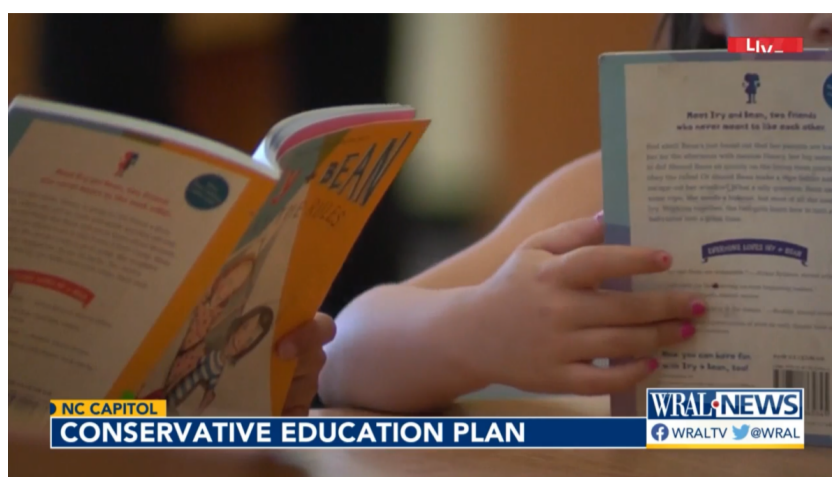


Over the past two weeks, Governor Cooper vetoed several bills, including:

- **SB49, Parents' Bill of Rights.** This bill burdens school staff with requests and objections without penalty for abusive and frivolous behavior, undermines our ability to gather anonymous data about student health and well-being, disallows any books or other curriculum that discusses LGBTQ families in K-4, and forbids school staff from providing confidential advice or assistance to students. This bill injects culture wars into the classroom.
- **HB488, Code Council Reorganization and Various Code Amendments.** This bill is bad for energy efficiency and safety because it freezes residential building code standards at an already outdated level. It also splits the Building Code Council into two committees, commercial and residential, limits the governor's appointment power to the council, and will likely cause North Carolina to lose federal dollars under the FEMA program. Our state building standards are already outdated, so further delay is a mistake and will result in higher energy costs for new home buyers. The Governor's veto will protect years of work to make homes safer and more affordable. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
- **HB574, Fairness in Women's Sports Act.** If enacted, the bill will prevent transgender girls from participating in school sports from kindergarten through the collegiate level (private and public). I oppose this blanket ban because it's unfair and hurtful. There are already procedures in place to determine which team is appropriate for transgender athletes, on a case-by-case basis, taking all facts into consideration. Republican governors in other states have vetoed similar bills because they hurt their states' reputation and economy, and because they needlessly target an extremely small number of already vulnerable children. Read more [here](#).
- **HB618, Charter School Review Board.** In NC, it has always been the responsibility of the State Board of Education to supervise free public education. The new board established by this bill would have conflicts of interest; they are people who run charters and are vocal advocates for charter schools. We need serious and unbiased oversight as provided by the NC Constitution. This bill is bad policy and unconstitutional. Education experts, not partisan politicians, should conduct oversight of charter schools.
- **HB808, Gender Transition/Minors.** This bill strips rights from the parents of transgender children and undermines the standards of care utilized by accredited medical organizations. Republican governors from other states have rejected similar bills, and last month, a federal judge in Arkansas ruled that a similar bill violated the constitutional rights of doctors and discriminated against transgender people. HB808 is discriminatory and based on faulty information. Ordering doctors to stop following approved medical protocols sets a troubling precedent and is dangerous for vulnerable youth. One family in my district will be directly impacted by this bill and has [shared their story with the public](#), to help people understand what gender affirming care is and how it saves lives. You can read more about this issue in [Duke Sexual and Gender Minority Wellness Program's Policy Brief](#).

We expect to be called back into session to vote on motions to override all or most of these vetoes soon. I will vote to uphold the vetoes.

Legislation Highlight: SB90



SB90, Children's Laws Omnibus. This week, the House surprised us by gutting a unanimously-supported Senate bill about school searches and replacing it with an entirely different bill. It's late in the legislative session to roll out entirely new bills and this one has caught a lot of attention. The PCS of SB90 would require educators to tell parents if a child questions their gender and asks to go by different pronouns, lay out a new process for picking textbooks and library books, repeal a law that allows minors to seek mental health counseling confidentially, allow charter schools to force female students to wear skirts, and create a new group, largely appointed by the General Assembly's majority, to plan the curriculum for public schools statewide. **This bill would also create serious liability and hiring issues for school districts** by allowing parents to sue for damages for ill-defined "violations of the fundamental right to parent" and to force the firing of or pay cuts for superintendents. Members of the [NC Association of School Administrators](#) have noted that the bill would **create multiple logistical concerns for daily school operations and would take authority away from locally elected boards of education**. The bill was removed from a House Education committee earlier this week and its future is unclear as of today. Read more [here](#).

Legislation Highlight: HB542



HB542, HOA Revisions/Foreclosure Trustee Auctions. This bill is designed to limit the power of Home Owners' Associations (HOAs) to take people's homes through foreclosure by raising the lien threshold. While some HOA advocates have raised concerns about the possibility of the bill decreasing property values or making it too difficult for associations to collect, the bill sponsors have been responsive. It's a complicated bill that's been debated in the Senate Judiciary Committee three times and has been amended each time to address these concerns. The goal is to balance the concerns of responsible homeowners, HOAs, and residents who are in arrears on their dues. The bill is still evolving and has not come up for a vote yet. Read more [here](#).

Senator Marcus in the Community & Meetings in Raleigh



It's a special day when a new park opens in your hometown. I was happy to participate in the ribbon cutting on Sunday to celebrate the new Beaty Park. Thanks to the Davidson Town Board, the state funding from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, the Davidson Garden Club volunteers and all the citizens who helped make the park happen.



I attended the SCOTUS Action Briefing for State and Local Elected Officials on Voting Rights and Affirmative Action held by the [Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights](#). The U.S. Supreme Court recently issued its decisions on several critical civil rights cases challenging affirmative action in higher education. Our nation's future depends on full access to our democracy, and racial equity and diversity in higher education are imperative to achieving a thriving, multiracial democracy.

As a member of the [State Climate Policy Network](#) (SCPN), I attended a seminar hosted by [Climate XChange](#) where I learned about the anti-ESG bills, like [HB750](#), that are sweeping through the states. The proponents of these bills are gambling with taxpayer money and retirees' pension funds to advance their [unpopular](#) culture war. They are attempting to force states and companies to spend more and make less on returns by artificially favoring guns, oil, and other industries that are frequently associated with higher risks and negligent behavior. Ultimately, the attack on ESG is the next iteration of climate change denial. You can read Climate XChange's report on the topic [here](#).

Ms. Kimberly Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First St NE, Room 1A
Washington, DC 20426

Re: Mountain Valley Pipeline Southgate Extension Request - Docket #CP19-14-000

July XX, 2023

Dear Secretary Bose,

As members of the North Carolina General Assembly, we respectfully request the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission **deny an extension of the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for the Mountain Valley Pipeline Southgate (MVPS).**

Over the last five years since the proposed MVP Southgate was announced, we have increasingly heard from neighbors, residents and constituents about the real and significant concerns the MVPS poses to our communities. The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) has twice denied MVPS a 401 Water Quality Certification on the grounds that they did not meet water quality requirements, concerns the mainline would never be completed, and the lack of need for the project.¹ The proposed 74-mile project is set to terminate in Alamance County, North Carolina, where the Alamance County Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution against the project in 2018.

Notably, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Virginia State Conference² and local Pittsylvania Branch passed resolutions opposing FERC granting the MVP mainline extension request and the proposed MVPS Lambert compressor station, respectively³.

Additionally, more than 270 groups from across the country asked FERC to deny MVP's four-year extension request last year, and they were joined by 60 legislators from Virginia⁴ and North Carolina⁵, and more than 30,000 individuals⁶. Transco also publicly opposed the proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline Southgate extension.⁷ Finally, just this month, East Daley Analytics released an analysis saying "due to downstream constraints...the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) will run below half its capacity of 2 Bcf/d when the project is finally built" and "the Southgate project has been placed on indefinite hold after the denial of an air quality permit."⁸

Therefore, we ask the Commission to deny MVPS's request for these reasons:

1. **The MVP's developers have never demonstrated need, and they say the project may never be built**

I signed this letter encouraging the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to deny a permit for the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) fracked gas project. MVP developers have not demonstrated a need of the project, the MVP is still [missing multiple required permits](#), the company is in dire financial trouble, and the proposed project is [an example of environmental injustice](#), as it would run through largely impoverished and rural areas.


No North Carolina Budget Vote Until August



The NC Senate has not met in the past two weeks. North Carolina lawmakers are not expected to unveil the proposed state budget until mid-August, as Republican leaders in the House and Senate continue to negotiate behind closed doors. Raises for state employees and educators, tax cuts, and Medicaid expansion are on hold, despite the start of the new fiscal year on July 1. View [a video I recorded about the budget and other legislation here](#) and read more in the news [here](#).


Colonial Pipeline Permit Decision

The N.C. Department of Environmental Quality Has Granted Colonial Pipeline's application to install a waste water treatment plant in Huntersville.



This permit requires the groundwater to be treated onsite before it is discharged into North Prong Clark Creek and will result in many fewer trucks coming to and from the site.

How is the Final Permit Different from the Draft?



- Stronger Benzene limits
- Increases monitoring requirements for aquatic life, endangered species, and stream impairment
- Increases monitoring frequency for all volatile organic compounds to monthly
- Requires testing for PFAS
- Can be reopened for additional monitoring that would support the restoration effort

Beyond Open Round 2: \$15 Million Grant Program for Small Businesses



BEYOND OPEN
SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS

FOUNDATION FOR THE CAROLINES SUPPORTED BY WELLS FARGO'S OPEN FOR BUSINESS FUND

ROUND 2 GRANTS
CORRIDORS OF OPPORTUNITY

Grants from \$10,000 – \$150,000 to build economic mobility among diverse-owned small businesses in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Beyond Open is a competitive small business grant program centered on building economic mobility in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Round 2 is dedicated to supporting diverse-owned small businesses located in Charlotte's Corridors of Opportunity.

Grant awards can be used for capital assets such as equipment, technology, inventory and real estate, and do not need to be repaid.

\$5 million in grants will be awarded in each of three rounds for a total of \$15 million.

Over 150 Beyond Open grants from \$10,000 to \$150,000 will be awarded in Round 2. More than 3,200 applications were received in Round 1.

[Click Here to Apply!](#)

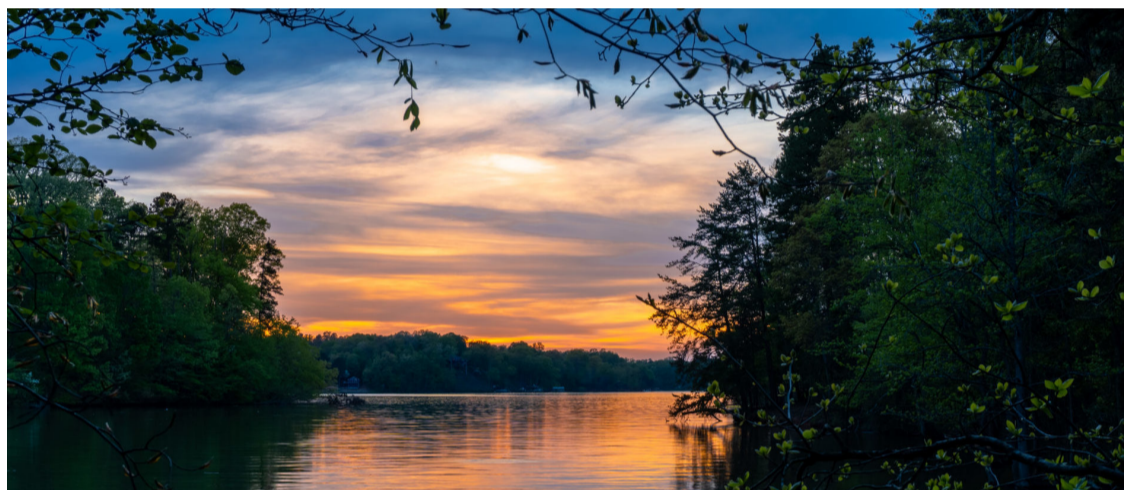
The Round 2 application will open on August 1 and will close on August 31.

Qualify for Affordable Connectivity Program



This federal program offers eligible households monthly discounts of \$30 or more on high-speed internet service and a \$100 discount on a digital device, which can help bridge the affordability gap that affects more than one million North Carolinians. Households may qualify for the ACP based on income or participation in government programs like Medicaid, SNAP, WIC, Lifeline, federal public housing assistance and others. Apply for the program or read more about how to qualify [here](#).

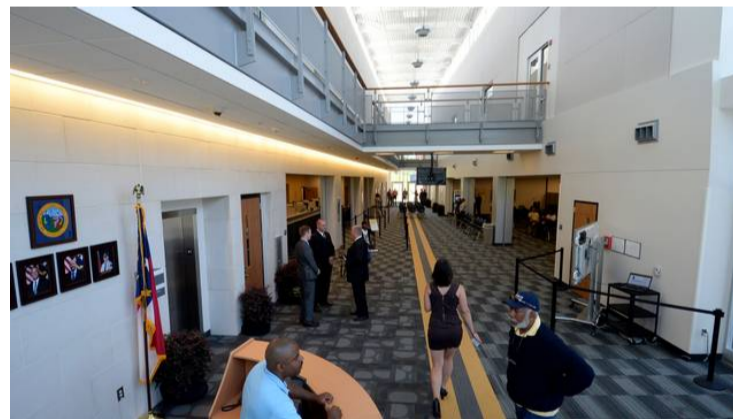
July is an Active Month for Boating and Fun in the Water



You can get a life ring for your dock from [Devoted Float](#) or the [Lake Norman Marine Commission](#).

[Love Where You Lake](#) is an excellent resource for boating information, including laws and ordinances.

Online DMV Services



The N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles website now has **wait times** listed for each of its 115 driver's license offices across the state. To check the wait time for your location, just hover over the icon marking each driver's license office, and a box will pop up with the current walk-in time. Read more [here](#).

Additionally, many DMV services, such as **driver's license renewal, vehicle registration renewal, and personalized plate orders can be performed online**. View a full list of online services [here](#). Other tips for planning your DMV visit can be found [here](#).

Free Property Tax Assistance Services



Do you need help with your property taxes? The [Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy](#) is providing free assistance to help homeowners prepare their NC property tax relief applications. Call 980-256-7952 or visit their website to learn more [here](#).

COVID-19 Test & Vaccine Updates



[NC DHHS](#) is partnering with Project Act to provide **free COVID-19 tests to all North Carolinians**. This program used to just be available for select zip codes, but it is now available statewide. Order your free tests [here](#).

Additionally, DHHS has **approved additional booster shots for folks 65+ and/or who are at high risk for severe illness**. Anyone who meets the age requirement is eligible for a bivalent booster if it has been at least 4 months since their previous vaccine. Folks with compromised immune systems can get a booster if it has been at least 2 months since their last vaccine. More information [here](#).

Financial Update on the State's General Fund

Beginning Cash, Friday, June 30	15,078,953,021.50
Add Receipts:	
Tax and Non-Tax Receipts	418,094,762.32
Coronavirus Relief Receipts	0.00
Other Receipts	1,649,332,337.33
Less Disbursements:	
Payroll	142,649,199.95
State Aid	6,311,859.63
Medicaid/Other Provider Payments	1,220,745,866.81
Tax Refunds/Distributions	79,804,183.21
Debt Service	0.00
Coronavirus Relief Transfers Out	0.00
General Operating	1,016,326,579.94
Ending Cash, Friday, July 07	14,680,542,431.61
Less Reserved Cash:	
Due to Local Governments – Sales and Use Tax Payable	921,401,731.50
Other Reserves	0.00
American Recovery Plan Act Reserve	103,076,693.32
Carry Forward Reserve	157,251,436.27
Clean Water Drinking Water Reserve	0.00
Coronavirus Capital Projects Reserve	0.00
Coronavirus Relief Reserve	0.00
Earthquake Disaster Recovery Reserve	0.00
Economic Development Project Reserve	601,900,000.00
Federal Infrastructure Match Reserve	95,328,642.00
Housing Reserve	0.00
Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery Reserve	59,860,339.84
Information Technology Reserve	108,943,174.00
Local Fiscal Recovery Reserve-ARPA	0.00
Local Govt Coronavirus Relief Reserve	0.00
Local Project Reserve	0.00
Medicaid Contingency Reserve	326,512,736.00
Medicaid Transformation Reserve	155,642,170.00
NC GREAT Reserve	0.00
Opioid Abatement Reserve	765,130.94
Public School Contingency Reserve	0.00
Public School Need Based Capital Reserve	0.00
Repairs and Renovations Reserve	0.00
Retiree Supplement Reserve	0.00
SCIF General Fund Reserve	0.00
Savings Reserve	4,750,001,113.98
Stabilization and Inflation Reserve	1,000,000,000.00
State Emergency Response/Disaster Reserve	873,491,738.42
Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve	0.00
Wilmington Harbor Enhancements Reserve	283,800,000.00
World University Games Reserve	25,000,000.00
Unreserved Cash Balance, Friday, July 07	5,217,567,525.34

The Office of the State Controller (OSC) released the General Fund Cash Watch numbers for the week ending Friday, July 7. OSC provides a weekly update on the State's General Fund cash position which can be found at osc.nc.gov. **The current unreserved cash balance in state coffers is \$5.217 billion.**

The State Controller is North Carolina's chief fiscal officer and serves as an independent resource to ensure the financial integrity of the State.

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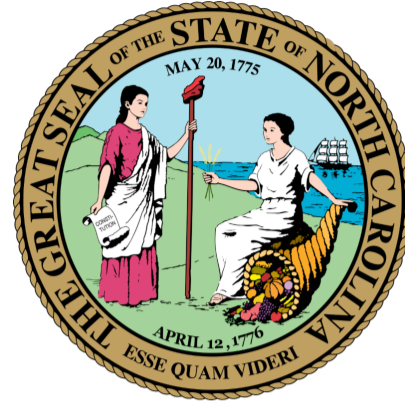
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How can we help you? Let us know and [reach out](#) to our office! We want to hear from you.

Senator Natasha Marcus | [Website](#)



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