

For Immediate Release



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From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
Mecklenburg County

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Greetings:

The General Assembly was in session on Wednesday. After session, I participated in community events and activities in the district. I also continue to participate in committee meetings.

Joyce Waddell



Meet Your Legislator

After a Sunday church service, Senator Waddell talks with several groups of young people about the importance of voting.

The first thing the Disaster Recovery Act of 2024 established is that Western North Carolina is unlikely to return to normal anytime soon. The \$273 million relief package extends the statewide declaration of emergency signed by the Governor on Sept. 25 to March 1, 2025.

Highlights

Disaster Relief Funding: The DRA directs the state controller to transfer \$273 million from the Savings Reserve to the Helene Fund.

The DRA includes the following appropriations:

\$250 million to the Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management, to provide the state match for federal disaster assistance programs for state agencies and local governments. The funds would also establish a revolving loan program to assist units of local government and state agencies with cash flow management while awaiting federal reimbursement.

Hurricane Helene

\$2 million for the Office of State Budget and Management to provide grants to the North Carolina League of Municipalities, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and the North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Governments to provide technical assistance with local recovery funds.

Education: The \$16 million in the first round would be used to compensate school nutrition employees at schools participating in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program. A system would be able to make up any number of missed school days or declare up to 20 days as completed, as well as use additional remote instruction hours up to 30 days or 180 hours of missed instructional time. All school employees would be compensated for any missed instruction days in September and October. The Department of Public Instruction would be required to report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by March 15, 2025, on the implementation of these funds.

Elections: In addition to the \$5 million allocation for voter outreach, the DRA would allow any registered North Carolina voter to be appointed chief judge or an assistant for a voting precinct regardless of county of residence. County boards of elections would be authorized to approve substitute voting sites and adjust the hours and days they are open. The DRA would also allow people displaced by the storm to return absentee ballots to any county. The State Board of Elections is asked to establish a hotline for all eligible voters and answer questions about how to cast a ballot in the November election.

Transportation: The DRA would empower the governor to waive Division of Motor Vehicles fees for lost licenses, replacement plates, late payments and other items. It would loosen environmental permitting requirements for highway repairs, as well as define the procurement methods allowed in impacted counties.

Even with the injected storm relief funding for those who were affected by the storm, I know it will be years before things get back to any sense of normalcy. I just hope the funds that were allocated will begin the process of helping the many residents who have lost so much.



Luncheon

Senator Waddell and other legislators participate in a community event and auction where Senator Waddell was the winner of the most unique hat.



NC General Assembly

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