



September 2025 | nclm.org

Did You Know?

Depending on where they live, some North Carolina voters may head to the polls Tuesday to vote in municipal primary elections. This year, [two-fifths](#) of the state's voters live in a municipality that has at least one seat on the ballot this fall.

New Legislation Taking Effect October 1

A new requirement for cities to conduct criminal background checks on new hires who may work with children is one of several new laws coming into effect Oct. 1.

When legislation is signed into law by the Governor following its passage by the General Assembly, it specifies when it [shall take effect](#). While some bills specify that it will become effective upon ratification, others specify an effective date. October 1 is the standard date on which many bills affecting criminal law, as well as those impacting administrative activities, will take

effect. Many of these bills were approved by the General Assembly during the recent session, with some having an impact on local governments.

- [Session Law 2025-16/House Bill 612 Fostering Care in NC Act](#) (Part IV) requires local governments to conduct criminal history record checks for applicants who are offered a position if the position requires the applicant to work with children in any capacity. Kristi Nickodem at the UNC School of Government has provided some [helpful guidance](#) on the new law.
- [Session Law 2025-12/House Bill 126 Revise Voluntary Ag District Laws](#) makes revisions to the voluntary agricultural district laws.
- [Session Law 2025-21/House Bill 247 Underground Safety Revisions](#) makes revisions to the Underground Damage Prevention Act, also known as NC 811 or "Call Before You Dig." The bill was requested by a group of stakeholders that included representation for cities and towns, and made primarily technical and administrative changes.
- [Session Law 2025-47/Senate Bill 391 DOT Omnibus](#) makes revisions to the laws related to the Department of Transportation, including authorizing the use of electronic speed-measuring systems ("speed enforcement cameras") in school zones.
- [Session Law 2025-65/Senate Bill 664 JMAC/ABC/Other Revisions](#) makes various changes to economic development programs and related issues, including an increase in the exemption for "non-betterment" costs for water and sewer lines that must be relocated because of a Department of Transportation project. Currently, the exemption from these costs applies to municipalities with fewer than 10,000 residents, and the new law will set the exemption threshold at 20,000.

Additional legislation enacted this year will take effect on November 1 and December 1, as well as on January 1, 2026. Future bulletin articles will detail other matters of interest to local governments as their effective dates near.

.....

Duke Energy Proposes Merger as Rate Cases Move Forward

On August 14, Duke Energy announced plans to merge its two operating companies in North Carolina and South Carolina. If approved, this merger

would harmonize electric rates across all of the utility's North Carolina service area, though an impending request by the company to increase rates in each of its two current territories will likely move ahead before a merger was completed.

Since 2012, when Duke Power Company acquired Progress Energy Carolinas (formerly known as Carolina Power & Light), the Duke Energy parent company has operated the two regulated utilities as separate companies with different rates for customers. Duke Energy is now requesting that the state Utilities Commission approve the consolidation of rates and business practices into a single regulated utility that would serve customers in both North and South Carolina.

In its initial merger filing with the Utilities Commission, Duke states that the proposed merger would enable combined planning and operations, resulting in substantial benefits to customers. Duke has requested approval of the merger by May 1, 2026, although the Commission is not under a deadline for making a decision.

While this merger decision is pending, Duke Energy has indicated that both its current North Carolina utilities will seek rate increases later this year.

While bill impact estimates are still being developed, Duke has invited NCLM to participate in discussions about the case before it is filed. The formal requests are anticipated to occur in the fourth quarter of this year. As in past rate cases, NCLM will seek opportunities to save cities money, promote sustainability and efficiency goals, and mitigate disproportionate increases.

If Duke Energy Progress and Duke Energy Carolinas complete their rate filings before the end of the year, any increases would take effect around August 2026. We will share more information about the process and the issues involved over the coming months.

.....

Legislature Appoints Interim Committees

As has been common practice during the interim period between the legislative long and short sessions, legislative leaders made appointments to [interim oversight and study committees](#) in mid-August. These committees hold different powers, although most are established to conduct further fact-finding on topics of interest to both chambers or to provide general guidance or oversight to executive branch agencies or legislatively directed activities. It is unclear what these committees will take up over the coming months, due mostly to the perpetual session model the legislature has adopted, so this will be something to watch.

While most appointments are made at the start of the legislative session and are based on standing committee service, Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Berger announced additional [updates](#) to Senate interim committees on August 19.

League Leaders Visit Rowan County

On August 19, NCLM President Martha Sue Hall and NCLM Executive Director Rose Vaughn Williams joined 21 Rowan County local officials for a meeting with state legislators, Senator Carl Ford and Representatives Harry Warren and Grant Campbell. Attendees had the opportunity to share activities taking place in their communities and hear from legislators on various topics.

Check out this [article](#) from the Salisbury Post that provides more details from the event.



WORKING AS ONE. ADVANCING ALL.

CONTACT US



Stay Connected with the North Carolina League of Municipalities

{{Companyaddress}}

[Manage Preferences](#)