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General Assembly's Short Session Convenes

North Carolina legislators gaveled in for the year's Short Session Tuesday, with regular business anticipated through at least early July.

Lawmaking activities started right away, with both chambers immediately considering a [must-pass bill](#) that would provide funding to pay Medicaid obligations through the end of June. That bill also contained a provision extending a deadline for directed grants received by many cities, detailed elsewhere in this Bulletin.

Another bill whose details were worked out behind closed doors prior to session, [SB 214 Various Local Provisions VII](#), ran into a roadblock in the House after members objected to a never-before-seen provision giving Franklin County commissioners the ability to acquire land in other named counties without the need for approval by those counties' commissioners. The provision, [related to the area's water system needs](#), drew immediate opposition from the other named counties. House leaders punted their vote to April 28, while the Senate gave it initial approval on a divided vote. The bill also contained other local provisions affecting cities and towns, including deannexations in Southport, Kannapolis, and Sunset Beach.

Both chambers also welcomed new members Tuesday. The N.C. Senate swore in Sen. Jonah Garson, replacing former Sen. Graig Meyer, who resigned last month. The N.C. House swore in Rep. Anna Ferguson, who was selected a few weeks ago to serve out the remainder of the term for former Rep. Mike Clampitt, who passed away in March. Another political change occurred in the N.C. House with members of the House Freedom Caucus selecting Rep. Ben Moss as their new chair, replacing former chair Rep. Keith Kidwell, who lost his primary election in March.

Read on for more legislative news from the week that affects cities and towns.

Property Tax Updates

The topic of property taxes continued to receive top billing in this first week of the N.C. General Assembly's Short Session. Notably, Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger reiterated his prior promise to introduce a bill that would institute a 12-month pause on

property revaluations. The News & Observer [reported](#) that he said he would like to see his proposal become law by mid-May.

Berger told the news outlet that he preferred this approach to that of the House, whose interim study committee on the topic recommended a constitutional amendment to be put on the ballot this fall that would limit local property tax levies. No House member has introduced such a proposal yet, though study committee chairs [introduced another committee recommendation](#) yesterday to close a property tax loophole for affordable housing. In his public comments, Berger said that his revaluation pause would allow legislators to take quick action in response to property owner concerns about rising property taxes. In contrast, he noted that a constitutional amendment would not go into effect until later, after an election in which voters approved it.

Now is the time to express your concerns to state legislators about limiting property tax levies. Share with them the general points in [this one-pager](#) and the public safety points in [this one-pager](#), along with specific data from your city or town about what services property taxes pay for.

What's Happening at the General Assembly

Legislation of Interest to Local Governments

In just the first few days of the Short Session, lawmakers are introducing legislative proposals, including the following of interest to cities.

- **Directed Grants Deadline Extension** – Moves a critical deadline for spending “directed grant” funding from June 30, 2026, to June 30, 2027. The directed grant funding was initially appropriated by the General Assembly in FY 2024 and FY 2025, and the deadline would require the funding to revert to the state if not spent by the recipient. The extension is included in Section 1 of [HB 696 Medicaid & HHS Adjust./Other Critical Needs](#), which is scheduled for final votes in the House and Senate next week and is expected to be signed into law by the Governor.
- **Downzoning Relief** – The continued effort to obtain relief from the 2024 law that restricts downzoning brought bills filed for the following localities. As a reminder, during the 2025 Long Session, the Senate passed [SB 587 Clarify Nonconforming Changes](#), which would reverse substantial issues that have arisen. While the bill passed the Senate unanimously, it has received no action in the House, but is eligible for consideration during the Short Session.
 - Woodfin ([SB 807 Restore Down-Zoning Auth./Woodfin](#))
 - Harnett/ Lee/Sampson Counties ([SB 828 Restore Down-Zoning Auth./Various Counties](#))
 - Charlotte-Mecklenburg/Cornelius/Huntersville/Davidson ([SB 833 Restore Down-Zoning Char/Meck & Others.](#))
 - Harnett County Airport ([HB 1028 Harnett County Jetport](#))
- **Grocery Tax Repeal** – A group of Republican lawmakers introduced a proposal, [HB 1032 Repeal Two Percent Local Grocery Tax](#), to repeal the state's tax on groceries and unprepared food, a measure that is estimated to cost local governments roughly \$100 million statewide annually.

Also this week, Governor Stein released his [proposed budget](#) for FY 2027, including a recommendation for \$15.5 million in law enforcement bonuses. The funding would provide \$5,000 sign-on bonuses for newly certified Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) graduates and \$10,000 sign-on bonuses for new out-of-state hires certified through the North Carolina criminal justice training standards.

ADA Rules for Websites

Compliance Deadlines Extended

Four days ahead of a key compliance deadline earlier this month, the US Department of Justice announced extensions for local governments and other public entities to achieve website accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Aimed at assisting persons with vision, hearing, and other impairments, the initial rule would require functionalities that convert visual content into audible speech, captioning for videos, and transcripts for audio clips. The initial requirements and deadlines were established under federal authority granted by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

If your municipality serves 50,000 or more residents, your compliance deadline has been extended to April 26, 2027.

If your municipality serves fewer than 50,000 residents, your compliance deadline has been extended to April 26, 2028.

NCLM has created this [resource page](#), and the UNC School of Government staff offers this [blog post](#) for further info.

NCLM Comments on Pension System Rates Policy

NCLM urged support of [a new policy](#) to calculate pension system contribution rates in [comments](#) submitted to the [Local Government Employees Retirement System \(LGERS\) Board of Trustees](#) earlier this month. This policy, set for a Board vote next week, would replace the prior guidelines that the Board followed in setting the percentage of payroll local government employers must contribute to the retirement system.

The League has advocated for the past 18 months for improvements to this policy, with the aim of reducing the contribution rate while still keeping the system adequately funded. The Board already adopted one key recommendation from a [League-commissioned actuarial study](#), voting in January to lengthen the period of time to pay back system liabilities. That change would combine with the proposed policy to increase the likelihood of reduced contribution rates for local government employers in the coming years.

Broadly, the League comments commended the new policy for the balance it struck between cushioning the LGERS system against unpredictable changes while

containing mechanisms to avoid overpayments by employers. Ultimately, the updated guidelines should help local governments better keep their costs under control from year to year. The policy also includes triggers that, if met, would give the Board the option to award a cost of living increase to local government retirees, achieving another goal of League members.

Regional Town and State Dinners Conclude in Raleigh



What kicked off in Wilmington in late February wrapped up last week in Raleigh on April 15, marking the end of this biennium's regional Town and State Dinners. These five dinners provided the opportunity for more than 400 local officials to engage directly with members of the General Assembly, discuss shared priorities, and strengthen the partnerships that help move communities forward.

A huge thank you to Albemarle Mayor Pro Tem and NCLM 2025-2026 President Martha Sue Hall for her leadership and support of each of these events across the state. Thank you also to each of our featured legislators, each of whom had local government experience before joining the General Assembly.

Wilmington: Senator Michael Lazarra (Jacksonville City Council and 2018-2019 NCLM President)

Concord: Representative Becky Carney (Mecklenburg County Commission)

Greensboro: Representative Steve Ross (Mayor, City of Burlington)

Hickory: Representative Ray Pickett (Blowing Rock Town Council)

Raleigh: Senator Gale Adcock (Cary Town Council)

Check out the photo albums from each event by clicking on the event location below.

Wilmington
Concord
Greensboro
Hickory
Raleigh

Not able to attend any of these regional dinners? Don't worry! In 2027, we will host our biennial Town & State Dinner in Raleigh. More details coming later this year.



Has your city approved legislative priorities? Let us know!

As legislators kick off their Short Session, we know that you have been planning for their return for months. Through passing your own legislative agendas, you are asserting your positions on key issues, proactive and reactive, and using them as your guiding documents for communicating with your legislative delegation.

If your government has approved a legislative agenda for the short session, please email it to NCLM Government Affairs Coordinator, [Sophia Trentacosta](#).

Cities at the General Assembly

Holly Springs

From time to time, city representatives are invited to provide comments or information to legislative committees on various projects underway in their area. These interactions are important ways to help legislators understand the important work being done in cities across the state.

This week, Holly Springs Manager Randy Harrington and Economic Development Director Irena Krstanovic joined the [Joint Legislative Economic Development and Global Engagement Oversight Committee](#) to provide insight into the area's work in attracting life sciences projects like Fujifilm, Amgen, and others.

To learn more about their presentation, click the button below, and look out for future profiles.



HOLLY SPRINGS PRESENTATION



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