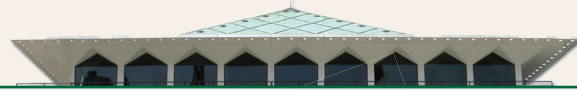


# 2011 Legislative Session

The Association thanks the many county commissioners and county staff across the state, with whom staff worked hand-in-hand to achieve the county legislative agenda and to protect county priorities. In many ways, the General Assembly's 2011 Regular Session was a historic session with new leadership, new members and scarce fiscal resources. Due to county officials' strong connections with your delegations and diligent communications, the Association achieved many county goals. A more detailed summary of the session is available on the NCACC's website at [www.ncacc.org/countylines/2011/07/legislature.html](http://www.ncacc.org/countylines/2011/07/legislature.html). In addition, a look at issues included in bills that made the crossover deadline and are eligible for consideration in 2012 can be found at [www.ncacc.org/countylines/2011/08/legislature.html](http://www.ncacc.org/countylines/2011/08/legislature.html).



## STATE BUDGET



### Where we started

- \$3.5 billion deficit of \$20 billion budget
- Likely diversion of cost shifts to counties
- Attacks on school construction lottery funds
- Raiding of county revenues
- Community impacts from state budget cuts

Bill: H200

Staff contact: Rebecca Troutman, (919) 715-4360

### Where we ended

- Increased lottery funding to \$100 million
- Stopped shift of school bus responsibility (\$56 million)
- Stopped shift of workers' compensation (at least \$36 million)
- Stopped shift of tort claims (at least \$5 million)
- Minimized recurring mental health cuts

## JUSTICE REINVESTMENT



### Where we started

- H642 proposed to shift all misdemeanants to county jails; estimated cost to counties of \$35 million – \$48 million

Bill: H642

Staff contact: Amy Bason, (919) 715-1430

### Where we ended

- Voluntary program begins January 2012
- Contracts between counties and Department of Correction for space; other costs to be reimbursed
- "Quick Dip" provision included – allows probation officers to jail probation violators up to six days per month

## COUNTY REVENUES



### Where we started

- Continued erosion of the county property tax base through new and expanded exemptions and exclusions
- County revenues at risk due to state budget deficit

Bills: H92, H246, H747, H818, S210, S216

Staff contact: Rebecca Troutman, (919) 715-4360

### Where we ended

- 0.4 percent Land Transfer Tax option repealed
- Worked to prevent movement of various property tax exemption bills, such as exempting commercial fishing boats, expanding religious exemptions, increasing homestead exemptions and charitable organization exemptions, etc.
- Property tax exemption study bill introduced to evaluate assessment process and extent of current property tax exemptions

## COUNTY AUTHORITY



### Where we started

- Protect against erosion of county autonomy
- Expand county authority

Bills: H593, H650, H662, H687, H806, S98, S182, S183, S433, S756

Staff contact: Amy Bason, (919) 715-1430

### Where we ended

- Numerous bills introduced seeking limits on county authority in areas such as zoning, awarding of attorneys fees, gun regulations, building inspections, pre-trial programs, etc. Many of these bills were delayed, moved to study or modified to lessen the impact to counties
- Worked to increase county authority
- Human Services consolidation passed by Senate. Currently in House committee. Would grant counties increased local authority

## ANNEXATION



### Where we started

- Municipalities can involuntarily annex
- Counties not involved in process
- Municipalities may charge citizens fees for connection to water and sewer

Bill: H845

Staff contact: Kevin Leonard, (919) 715-4369

### Where we ended

- Municipalities must provide notice to counties when crossing county lines
- Municipalities required to provide free water and sewer connections to newly annexed citizens within 3.5 years
- Landowners may block involuntary annexation via new 60 percent petition process
- Tax assessor's role in petition process changed; now the responsibility of the Board of Elections



- 1. Oppose shift of state transportation responsibilities to counties**
  - No legislation introduced to shift secondary road responsibility
  - Budget continues to lower secondary road maintenance and construction funding
- 2. Reinstate ADM and lottery funds for school construction**
  - \$100 million appropriated in county school construction lottery funds
  - ADM Fund remains unfunded, but not eliminated
- 3. Ensure adequate mental health funding**
  - Budget for community mental health reduced in year one only
  - State funding for local psych bed capacity maintained at current levels

- 4. Preserve the existing local revenue base**
  - 0.4 percent land transfer tax option repealed
  - Other introduced property tax exemptions and exclusions not considered
- 5. Authorize local revenue options**
  - Legislation introduced to grant counties menu of revenue options; bill was not considered this session

**NCACC LEGISLATIVE GOALS ACHIEVED IN 2011 SESSION**

**AGRICULTURE**

- Fund agricultural research and extension services – SL2011-145 (State Appropriations Act – minimal cut of \$50,000)
- Support Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council recommendations – H168 (Farms Exempt From City Annexation & ETJ)

**ENVIRONMENT**

- Streamline water supply reservoir permitting – H609 (Promote Water Supply Development)
- Authorize county oversight of bio-solids disposal – Studies Bill, H733 (Modify Property Finder Provisions)
- Clarify yard waste facility runoff statutes – H119 (Environmental Technical Corrections)
- Create study commission on horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing – H242 (Natural Gas, Bonds, Fees, Studies)

**HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

- Maintain TANF Funds to counties – SL2011-145 (State Appropriations Act – maintains funding)
- Maintain childcare subsidy administration at 5 percent – SL2011-145 (State Appropriations Act – sets admin 4 percent)
- Expedite NCFast automation and policy simplification – SL2011-145 (State Appropriations Act – authorizes DHHS to fund and expedite program)
- Retain “electing” counties’ financial incentives – SL2011-145 (State Appropriations Act – retains incentives)



**INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

- Modernize annexation laws – H845 (Annexation Reform Act of 2011)
- Authorize counties to offer broadband through partnership or direct service – SL2011-163 (Allow County Public-Private Partnerships – Nash County only)
- Protect privacy of citizen email notification and distribution lists – SL2011-54 (Statewide Email Subscription Lists)
- Reform workers’ compensation – H709 (Protect and Put NC Back to Work)
- Oppose contributory negligence tort reform – H542 (Tort Reform Act of 2011)
- Promote utilization of 911 centers by protecting confidentiality – S98 (911 Call Transcripts)

**JUSTICE & PUBLIC SAFETY**

- Protect county jail system – SL2011-192 (Justice Reinvestment)
- Allow court facility fee flexibility – SL2011-145 (State Appropriations Act)
- Authorize inmate electronic monitoring cost reimbursement – H662 (Electronic Monitoring Fee)

**PUBLIC EDUCATION**

- Increase high school graduation rates – H822 (Dropout Recovery Pilot)
- Reinstate ADM and lottery funds for school construction – SL2011-145 (State Appropriations Act – maintains funding at \$100 million)

**TAX & FINANCE**

- Recover costs through In Rem foreclosure fee – S537 (Increase In Rem Foreclosure Fee)
- Simplify Register of Deeds fees – H384 (Register of Deeds)

