



LAND *for* TOMORROW

For Immediate Release

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MAJORITY OF HOUSE, SENATE SUPPORTS BILL FOR LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION BONDS

Raleigh, N.C. – A bipartisan majority of House and Senate members in the General Assembly have sponsored legislation to authorize a statewide bond referendum on spending \$1 billion over the next five years to protect North Carolina’s critical water and land resources. As of the end of session on Wednesday, there were 65 sponsors in the House and 28 in the Senate for identical House Bill 990 and Senate Bill 1522.

“Nearly 50,000 more acres of North Carolina’s natural areas and many adjoining streams, rivers, sounds and lakes, will be developed before the General Assembly goes home,” said Kate Dixon, executive director of Land for Tomorrow. “This broad bipartisan support recognizes the urgency to protect special places important to the economy and quality of life in our state.”

Chief sponsors of the bills in the House and Senate are Rep. Lucy Allen and Sen. Charles Albertson, who were co-chairs of the General Assembly’s Land and Water Conservation Study Commission. The commission recommended such legislation after hundreds of supporters attended statewide public meetings in January.

The vast majority of the bonds would go to land and water trust funds the General Assembly established in the 1980s and 1990s. Funding for those trust funds has been used to protect thousands of miles of drinking and recreational waters in North Carolina, establish state parks, fund local recreation projects, and preserve unique natural areas and historical places.

Approximately \$200 million of the bonds would go toward protecting prime agricultural and forest lands in North Carolina. In 2005, North Carolina lost 1000 farms, leading the nation. Forestry acreage is at its lowest point in decades. During the study commission’s hearings, farmers made strong appeals for the state to help them preserve their farms. Funds would be used to pay landowners for agreements to continue working the land and not to develop their farms or forests.

“The trust funds have done a good job, but rapid land development and skyrocketing land prices have outpaced the trust funds’ ability to keep up,” said Dixon. “Last year, there was a \$300 million-plus shortfall in needs compared to funds available.”

According to a Land for Tomorrow report, more than 100,000 acres of North Carolina land are developed each year. North Carolina has one of the nation’s fastest growing populations, and more than 3,300 miles of the state’s streams and rivers don’t meet water quality standards.

Land for Tomorrow is a diverse partnership of more than 250 organizations, including local governments, businesses, conservationists, farmers, foresters and health care professionals.

A complete list of the sponsors of both the House and Senate bills is attached.

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Senate Bill 1522

Primary Sponsor:

Charles Albertson (D)

Co-sponsors:

Austin Allran (R); Tom Apodaca (R); Bob Atwater (D); Stan Bingham (R); Julia Boseman (D); Harry Brown (R); Dan Clodfelter (D); Janet Cowell (D); Walter Dalton (D); Katie Dorsett (D); Steve Goss (D); Malcolm Graham (D); Kay Hagan (D); Fletcher Hartsell (R); David Hoyle (D); Neal Hunt (R); Clark Jenkins (D); Ed Jones (D); Ellie Kinnaird (D); Jean Preston (R); William Purcell (D); Joe Sam Queen (D); Tony Rand (D); John Snow (D); Richard Stevens (R); A. B. Swindell (D); David Weinstein (D)

House Bill 990

Primary Sponsors:

Lucy Allen (D); William Wainwright (D); Pricey Harrison (D); Philip Haire (D)

Co-sponsors:

Martha Alexander (D); Jeff Barnhart (R); Larry Bell (D); Dan Blue (D); Alice Bordsen (D); Larry Brown (R); Harold Brubaker (R); Becky Carney (D); Walter Church (D); George Cleveland (R); Lorene Coates (D); Linda Coleman (D); William Current (R); Margaret Dickson (D); Jerry Dockham (R); Nelson Dollar (R); Bobby England (D); Bill Faison (D); Jean Farmer-Butterfield (D); Susan Fisher (D); Pryor Gibson (D); Rick Glazier (D); Bruce Goforth (D); Melanie Goodwin (D); Jim Gulley (R); Larry Hall (D); Ty Harrell (D); Dewey Hill (D); Hugh Holliman (D); Verla Insko (D); Maggie Jeffus (D); Carolyn Justice (R); James Langdon (R); Marvin Lucas (D); Paul Luebke (D); Daniel McComas (R); Bill McGee (R); Marian McLawhorn (D); Tim Moore (R); Bill Owens (D); Earline Parmon (D); Louis Pate (R); Garland Pierce (D); Ray Rapp (D); Deborah Ross (D); Drew Saunders (D); Mitchell Setzer (R); Timothy Spear (D); Fred Steen (R); Bonner Stiller (R); Cullie Tarleton (D); Charles Thomas (R); Joe Tolson (D); Alice Underhill (D); Edith Warren (D); Jennifer Weiss (D); Winkie Wilkins (D); Arthur Williams (D); Larry Womble (D); Michael Wray (D); Thomas Wright (D)

ABOUT LAND FOR TOMORROW

Land for Tomorrow is a commitment to preserve and protect North Carolina's water, land and historic places. The goal is to increase public awareness for the need to protect additional land and historic places that are critical to the economic well-being and quality of life in North Carolina. Through public education, Land for Tomorrow wants to help the state reach its declared goal of conserving a million acres, and ensure that critical land will be available to provide clean air and drinking water, strengthen our communities, promote job growth and enhance the quality of life for generations to come. For additional information about Land for Tomorrow, visit

www.landfortomorrow.org.

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