



# SENATE BILL 540: Priority Pass/Ferry

2015-2016 General Assembly

<b>Committee:</b>	Senate Re-ref to Transportation. If fav, re-ref to Finance	<b>Date:</b>	April 14, 2015
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Sens. Rabon, Meredith, Harrington	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Giles S. Perry Committee Counsel
<b>Analysis of:</b>	PCS to First Edition S540-CSRwf-10		

**SUMMARY:** *Senate Bill 540 authorizes DOT to issue passes authorizing priority ferry boarding, for an additional fee of \$150.*

*The proposed committee substitute clarifies that the priority boarding fee is in addition to any applicable ferry toll.*

**CURRENT LAW:** Current G.S. 136-82 authorizes the Board of Transportation to establish tolls on the State Ferry system. Currently, tolls are charged on the Swan Quarter/Ocracoke, Cedar Island/Ocracoke, and Southport/Fort Fisher routes.

Currently, according to the Ferry Division website: "*priority passes are only available at the Hatteras-Ocracoke route. Since a ferry boat is the only way to access Ocracoke Island, businesses, services and individuals who travel back and forth more than twice a week, each week can apply for a priority pass. Passes are issued on an as-need basis at the beginning of each year.*" No fee is currently charged for a priority pass.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** Senate Bill 540:

- Authorizes DOT to issue an annual pass to an individual passenger that entitles the passenger to priority when boarding a ferry passenger vessel, for an additional fee of \$150. The proceeds of the priority pass fee would go to a reserve account within the Highway Fund, to be used exclusively for prioritized North Carolina Ferry System ferry passenger vessel replacement projects in the Division in which the proceeds are earned.
- Provides that DOT shall not issue free annual passes to individual passengers that entitle the passengers to priority when boarding a ferry passenger vessel.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This act becomes effective July 1, 2015, and applies to passes issued on or after that date.

