



# HOUSE BILL 133: Graham County Occupancy Tax.

2023-2024 General Assembly

<b>Committee:</b>	Senate Finance. If favorable, re-refer to Rules and Operations of the Senate	<b>Date:</b>	June 21, 2023
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Rep. Gillespie	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Trina Griffin
<b>Analysis of:</b>	First Edition		Staff Attorney

**OVERVIEW:** House Bill 133 would create a special taxing district consisting of that part of Graham County that is located outside the incorporated areas of the county and authorize that special taxing district to levy a 3% room occupancy tax. The proceeds of the tax would be remitted to a tourism development authority, which must use at least two-thirds of the proceeds for tourism promotion and the remainder for tourism-related expenditures.

**CURRENT LAW:** Graham County has the authority to levy a 3% room occupancy tax.<sup>1</sup> The Towns of Fontana Dam, Lake Santeetlah, and Robbinsville, which are located in Graham County, also have the authority to levy a 3% room occupancy tax.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** House Bill 133 would create a special taxing district consisting of that part of Graham County located outside of the incorporated areas of the county. The Graham County Board of Commissioners would serve ex officio as the governing body for the district and would be authorized to levy a 3% room occupancy tax in the district. The proceeds of the tax must be remitted to the Graham County Tourism Development Authority.

The Authority must deposit the proceeds into a special fund that bears interest or is invested in accordance with G.S. 159-30. At least two-thirds of the funds must be used to promote travel and tourism in the district and the remainder must be used for tourism-related expenditures in the district.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This act would become effective when it becomes law.

**BACKGROUND:** In 1997, the General Assembly enacted uniform municipal and county administrative provisions for occupancy tax,<sup>2</sup> which provide uniformity among counties and cities with respect to the levy, administration, collection, repeal, and imposition of penalties. In 1993, the House Finance Committee established the Occupancy Tax Guidelines, which address the rate of tax, the use of the tax proceeds, the administration of the tax, and the body with authority to determine how the proceeds will be spent. A summary of these provisions is detailed in the chart below.

UNIFORM OCCUPANCY TAX PROVISIONS
<b>Rate</b> – The county tax rate cannot exceed 6% and the city tax rate, when combined with the county rate, cannot exceed 6%.
<b>Use</b> – Two-thirds of the proceeds must be used to promote travel and tourism and the remainder must be used for tourism related expenditures.

<sup>1</sup> [S.L. 2015-128](#).

<sup>2</sup> G.S. 153A-155 and G.S. 160A-215.

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**Definitions** The term "net proceeds", "promote travel and tourism", and "tourism related expenditures" are defined terms.

**Administration** – The net revenues must be administered by a local tourism development authority that has the authority to determine how the tax proceeds will be used, is created by a local ordinance, and at least 1/2 of the members must be currently active in the promotion of travel and tourism in the county and 1/3 of the members must be affiliated with organizations that collect the tax.

**Costs of Collection** – The taxing authority may retain from the revenues its actual costs of collection, not to exceed 3% of the first \$500,000 collected each year plus 1% of the remainder collected each year.

*Nicholas Giddings, counsel to House Local Government, substantially contributed to this summary.*