



HOUSE BILL 147: Various Local Provisions XI.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate	Date:	July 28, 2026
Introduced by:	Rep. Ward	Prepared by:	Nicholas Giddings
Analysis of:	Fourth Edition		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 147 would do the following:*

- *Remove the cap on satellite annexations for the Town of Bear Grass.*
- *Codify and amend the authority of the Game Commission of Currituck County.*
- *Modify the conduct of primary elections in the City of Hickory.*
- *Remove certain described property from the corporate limits of the Town of Leland.*

CURRENT LAW/BILL ANALYSIS:

PART I – BEAR GRASS SATELLITE ANNEXATIONS

G.S. 160A-58.1 governs the voluntary municipal annexation of noncontiguous property, also known as voluntary satellite annexation. If all property owners in a satellite area petition a municipality for voluntary annexation of the noncontiguous property, the municipality may annex the property, but only if the following 5 requirements are met:

1. The nearest point on the proposed satellite corporate limits must not be more than 3 miles from the primary corporate limits of the annexing municipality.
2. No point on the proposed satellite corporate limits may be closer to the primary corporate limits of another municipality than to the primary corporate limits of the annexing municipality.
3. The area must be so situated that the annexing municipality will be able to provide the same services within the proposed satellite corporate limits than it provides within its primary corporate limits.
4. If the area proposed for annexation, or any portion thereof, is a subdivision as defined in G.S. 160D-102(31), the entire subdivision must be included.
5. *The area within the proposed satellite corporate limits, when added to the area within all other satellite corporate limits, may not exceed 10% of the area within the primary corporate limits of the annexing city.*

Part I, effective when it becomes law, would remove the 10% cap on satellite annexations for the Town of Bear Grass.

PART II – CODIFY AND AMEND THE GAME COMMISSION OF CURRITUCK COUNTY

The Game Commission of Currituck County (Game Commission) was created by Session Law in 1957 and operates in concert with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and has periodically been

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amended by Session Law thereafter¹. It regulates issues related to migratory waterfowl hunting and protection in Currituck County, including licenses for hunting blinds. The Game Commission is made up of seven members: one member from each of the five county commissioner residency districts and two at-large members.

Part II would codify the Game Commission, engrossing the changes made by Session Law over the years, with the following additional changes:

- Adds definitions for "stationary bush blind," "point blind," and "float blind."
- Allows for online applications and electronic communications.
- Gives the Game Commission discretion in establishing application fees for stationary bush blinds and float blinds. The current application fee is set at \$40.00 for residents and \$250.00 for nonresidents, plus a \$10.00 processing fee.
- Gives the Game Commission discretion in establishing application fees for point blinds. The current application fee is set at \$40.00, plus a \$10.00 processing fee.
- Clarifies that it is unlawful for a person to shoot waterfowl on the public waters of Currituck County, unless the person is lawfully hunting and has a stand of artificial decoys. Current law applies that prohibition only to the waters of Currituck Sound.
- Makes violation of the Article a Class 2 misdemeanor rather than a Class 3 misdemeanor.
- Prohibits use of seaplanes on the public waters of Currituck County from September 1 of each year until April 1 of the following year.
- Allows the salary of the members of the Game Commission to be set at the Game Commission's budget meeting in June of each year. The current salary for members of the Game Commission is currently \$1,000.00, and \$1,500.00 for the Chairman.
- Changes the appointing authority for the nonprofit corporation established for purposes of conservation, habitat preservation, and waterfowl protection in Currituck County from the Currituck County Board of Commissioners to the Game Commission. It also requires that a member of the Game Commission be made a member of the board of directors of the nonprofit corporation.
- Allows the Game Commission to modify times for waterfowl hunting following a public hearing, without the approval of the Currituck County Board of Commissioners.
- Requires the clerk to the Game Commission to keep a record of the location of every blind, either by plat book or any other method approved by the Game Commission, including an online blind map with an accurate database.
- Adds a presumption that number of stationary bush blinds in existence as of July 1, 2026, is presumed to be the maximum number of safe locations for stationary bush blinds.
- Amends the timing of when a person objecting to issuance of a license must notify the clerk of the objection.

¹ See Chapter 1178 of the 1971 Session Laws, Chapter 747 of the 1973 Session Laws, Chapter 398 of the 1975 Session Laws, Chapter 190 of the 1977 Session Laws, Chapter 622 of the 1981 Session Laws, Chapter 764 of the 1983 Session Laws, Chapter 1042 of the 1987 Session Laws, Chapter 808 of the 1989 Session Laws, S.L. 1997-163, S.L. 1997-456, S.L. 2003-16, S.L. 2009-70, and S.L. 2022-19.

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Part II would become effective December 1, 2026, and would apply to offenses committed on or after that date and applications for licenses filed on or after that date.

PART III – HICKORY PRIMARY ELECTIONS

Part 4 of Article 2 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes sets forth the optional structures for forms of government for city councils. With respect to methods of elections, the options are:

- At-large, with all the qualified voters of the entire city nominating all candidates and electing all members of the city council.
- Pure election districts, with the qualified voters of each district nominating candidates and electing members who reside in the district for seats apportioned to that district.
- Residency districts, with all the qualified voters of the entire city nominating all candidates and electing all members of the city council, but members must reside in and represent the districts according to the apportionment plan adopted.
- Combination of at-large and districts.

The Charter of the City of Hickory provides that the City Council consists of six aldermen, who each represent one of six wards and serve staggered four-year terms. Elections are conducted in even-years using the nonpartisan primary and election method, with all qualified voters of the City voting for all aldermen.

Part III, effective when it becomes law and applicable to elections conducted on or after that date, would revise the Charter of the City of Hickory to require that if more than two candidates file to represent a single ward, the City of Hickory would conduct its non-partisan primary using pure election districts. However, the general election for all aldermen would remain at-large.

PART IV – LELAND DEANNEXATION

Under Section 1 of Article VII of the NC Constitution, the General Assembly is empowered to "provide for the organization and government and the fixing of boundaries of counties, cities and towns, and other governmental subdivisions, and, except as otherwise prohibited by this Constitution, may give such powers and duties to counties, cities and towns, and other governmental subdivisions as it may deem advisable." Pursuant to this Section, the General Assembly enacted Article 4A of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes which governs annexations by municipalities. In addition, the General Assembly may annex property by local act. However, the General Assembly has not enacted any method for municipalities to deannex property; only the General Assembly may deannex property.

Part IV, effective June 30, 2027, would remove certain described property from the corporate limits of the Town of Leland.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Except as otherwise provided, the act is effective when it becomes law.

Chris Saunders, Staff Attorney in the Legislative Analysis Division, substantially contributed to this summary.