



SENATE BILL 655: Extend Certain Rights to Catawba Nation.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	House Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	June 18, 2025
Introduced by:	Sens. Alexander, Overcash, Britt	Prepared by:	Brad Krehely
Analysis of:	Third Edition		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *Senate Bill 655 would grant to the Catawba Indian Nation certain rights currently granted by State law to the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians.*

CURRENT LAW: The Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians (EBCI) has been expressly granted various rights under State law. No rights have been expressly granted to the Catawba Indian Nation under State law.

BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1 would amend Chapter 1E (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians) to retitle this chapter "Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and Catawba Indian Nation" and grant to the Catawba Indian Nation rights currently granted to the EBCI under Chapter 1E by:

- Requiring the courts of this State to give full faith and credit to a judgment, decree, or order signed by a judicial officer of the Catawba Indian Nation.
- Granting to the Catawba Indian Nation Tribal Police Department the authority given to city police departments under Article 13 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes.
- Require the Chief and officers of the Catawba Indian Nation Tribal Police Department and officers with the Catawba Indian Nation Marshals Service to comply with the training and standards applicable to police officers in North Carolina.
- Grant the Catawba Nation Marshals Service access to all probation and parole records of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (DPS) to the same extent as a probation or post-release supervision officer of DPS for any individual over which the Catawba Nation Tribal Courts have jurisdiction to try and impose a sentence upon.

Section 2 would include the Catawba Indian Nation in the exchange of criminal and civil information between the Judicial Department and local, State, and federal governments and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians provided by the Administrative Officer of the Courts.

Section 3 would require copies of the appellate division reports to be provided to the Catawba Nation Tribal Courts, as is currently required for the EBCI Cherokee Supreme Court.

Section 4 would make it a first degree trespass for a person to enter or remain without authorization on lands of the Catawba Indian Nation after having been excluded by resolution passed by the Catawba Indian Nation Executive Committee, as is currently the case for a person entering or remaining without authorization on EBCI lands after having been excluded by a resolution passed by the EBCI Tribal Council.

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Section 5 would authorize the State Board of Community Colleges to waive tuition and registration fees for courses requested by and supporting the training needs of the Catawba Indian Nation law enforcement, fire, EMS or rescue and lifesaving tribal government departments or programs, as the Board is currently authorized to do for training meeting the needs of EBCI emergency response departments and programs.

Section 6 would provide that nothing in this act would invalidate any agreement between any county and the Catawba Indian Nation in existence at the time this act becomes effective.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Section 4 would become effective December 1, 2025, and would apply to offenses committed on or after that date. The remainder of this act would be effective when it becomes law.

*Bill Patterson, Staff Attorney for the Legislative Analysis Division, contributed substantially to this summary.