



# SENATE BILL 697: Lake Norman Marine Commission.

2025-2026 General Assembly

<b>Committee:</b>	Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate	<b>Date:</b>	May 6, 2025
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Sens. Sawyer, Alexander	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Aaron McGlothlin
<b>Analysis of:</b>	Second Edition		Staff Attorney

**OVERVIEW:** *Senate Bill 697 would reconstitute the Lake Norman Marine Commission (Commission), codify the session law that authorized the creation of the Commission under Article 6B of Chapter 77 of the General Statutes, and make various revisions to this Article as it relates to the governance of the Commission.*

**CURRENT LAW:** Chapter 1089 of the 1969 Session Laws (An Act to Establish the Lake Norman Marine Commission) enabled Catawba, Iredell, Lincoln, and Mecklenburg Counties to create by joint resolution the Lake Norman Marine Commission. The Commission regulates all matters relating to or affecting public recreation and water safety on Lake Norman and its shoreline area. The Commission is governed by a board of five commissioners. The Board of Commissioners of Catawba County appoints two commissioners, and Iredell, Lincoln, and Mecklenburg Counties each appoint one commissioner. A county may unilaterally withdraw from the Commission which causes its dissolution. Once dissolved, the property of the Commission must be equitably divided among the four counties and any public agencies serving the area.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** **Section 1(a) and 1(b)** would codify Chapter 1089 of the 1969 Session Laws (An Act to Establish the Lake Norman Marine Commission), as amended, under Article 6B of Chapter 77 of the General Statutes.

**Section 1(c)** would make various revisions to the laws that govern the Commission, which include:

- Increasing the size of the Commission's governing board, from five members to nine members.
- Requiring that at least two counties must withdraw from the Commission in order to dissolve the Commission.
- Prohibiting commissioners from receiving any form of salary, wages, fees, or other forms of compensation for serving as a commissioner.
- Requiring the Commission to submit budget requests to participating local governments.
- Authorizing the Commission to require that any person born after January 1, 1988 must complete an approved boating education course to operate a motorized watercraft of 20 horsepower or greater on Lake Norman.
- Requiring each local government participating in the Commission to incorporate in their local code of ordinances the text of every joint resolution and regulation adopted by the Commission.
- Expressly authorizing the Commission to assess certain fees related to participating in education, training, or certification services provided by the Commission; use of facilities owned or operated by the Commission; or application for a permit administered by the Commission.

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**Section 2** would subject individuals serving on the Commission to the State Ethics Act, which would require them to submit a Statement of Economic Interest to the State Ethics Commission.

**Section 3** would make various conforming changes to the statute that governs the membership on the Catawba/Wateree River Basin Advisory Commission.

**Section 4** would provide that any joint resolution or appointments to the Commission made under prior law would expire by September 30, 2025.

**Section 5** would provide that, upon the adoption of a new joint resolution by the participating local governments reconstituting the Commission, all new appointments to the governing board of the Commission would become effective October 1, 2025.

**Section 6** would provide that all rules, regulations, and decisions made by the predecessor Commission would remain in full force and effect until and unless duly modified by the reconstituted Commission.

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