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Town & State Dinner

Over 400 NCLM members and state legislators attended the organization's Town & State Dinner held in Raleigh on Wednesday night, with state and local leaders breaking bread and discussing important policy issues. The event featured question-and-answer sessions with Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger and Senate Democratic Leader Sydney Batch, and House Speaker Destin Hall and House Democratic Leader Robert Reives, as well as a video highlighting the achievements of the NCLM's Municipal Accounting Software program and other member assistance.

In his comments, NCLM President and Durham President Pro Tem Mark-Anthony Middleton noted how much North Carolina has accomplished over the past few years through a state-local government partnership that has focused on addressing infrastructure needs. "We see it in water and wastewater investments that allow our cities and towns to grow. We see it in roads and streets that allow people to get to work and for commerce to flow. We see it in amenities, like parks, that make our cities and towns attractive places to live, raise families and open businesses," he said.

During the Q&A sessions, NCLM's First Vice President Martha Sue Hall and Second Vice President Jody McLeod quizzed the legislative leaders about subjects ranging from Helene disaster assistance to predictions about the legislative session budget negotiations and length. NCLM thanks legislators and members for their attendance at this important event promoting relationship-building. See photos of the event [here](#).

House Committee Examines Regulatory Barriers to Housing

This week, members of the [House Regulatory Reform Committee](#) heard from the NC Home Builders Association (NCHBA) on the impact of state and local regulations on housing affordability. In their [presentation](#), NCHBA staff criticized conditional zoning processes, where developers negotiate with local governments to voluntarily accept development conditions in exchange for more favorable standards. They also pointed to transportation and utility infrastructure challenges as key factors that slow housing

development and drive-up costs.

As part of their recommendations, NCHBA urged legislators to consider several policy changes, including implementing permit review shot clocks, reforming conditional zoning laws and mandating higher base zoning densities statewide. The state homebuilders focus on this issue comes as their nationally advocacy group, The National Association of Homebuilders, continues [to express concerns](#) about tariffs on Canadian lumber, as well as rising labor and building costs generally.

With potential legislative proposals on the horizon, NCLM staff encourages municipal officials to engage with legislators on the critical role of local decision-making in managing growth and development. Maintaining local flexibility is essential to ensuring that communities can balance housing needs with infrastructure capacity, public input, and long-term planning goals.

Cashflow Loan Program Underway

The State Treasurer's office has begun disbursement of interest-free loans to assist local governments facing cashflow issues as they continue to respond to the damage caused by Hurricane Helene. The General Assembly created the \$100 million cashflow loan program last December, and the program to begin disbursing the money was created with the collaboration of NCLM and the N.C. Association of County Commissioners. The goal of the program is to assist communities while they await federal funding to arrive as a part of U.S. disaster assistance programs.

[In a news release issue by State Treasurer Brad Briner](#), NCLM Executive Director Rose Vaughn Williams discussed the importance of the program and the work by the treasurer's office in quickly getting it up and running. "Cities and towns across Western North Carolina continue to face tremendous challenges rebuilding from the devastation wrought by Hurricane Helene, and many are dealing with financial hurdles as a result. Even as federal and other state resources are made available over time, municipalities have expenses that must be paid now to help residents recover," said Rose Vaughn Williams, North Carolina League of Municipalities executive director.

"This interest-free loan program, made possible by the General Assembly and Treasurer Briner, ultimately means that help is getting to residents more quickly and more efficiently, and that local governments have more of the resources that they need today. I want to personally thank Treasurer Briner and his office for their work and collaboration in this process," Vaughn Williams said.

You can read more about the cashflow loan program, as well as information about the money that has already been disbursed, in [this news article](#).

Helene Recovery

The state House this week approved another disaster assistance package for western North Carolina, the “[Disaster Recovery Act of 2025 – Part I](#),” which would provide \$500 million in funds for home reconstruction and repairs, assistance for farmers, support for reconstructing bridges and roads, debris removal, repair to state facilities, and grants for volunteer organizations and fire departments. The bill would mark the fourth Helene-related assistance legislation approved by the General Assembly, although it is not yet clear whether the Senate will seek substantial changes to the House bill or even pursue its own separate legislation. You can read more about the plan in [this news article](#).

Border Protection Act

The NC Senate advanced legislation this week intended to support President Trump’s immigration and border security efforts. [Senate Bill 153](#) directs state law enforcement and prison agencies to enter into memorandums of agreement with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and otherwise cooperate with the federal government in identifying, apprehending, and detaining individuals who have entered or stayed in the country unlawfully. Of interest to local governments is a section of the bill providing that cities and counties which adopt “sanctuary” policies thereby waive governmental immunity and could be sued by the victim of a crime that was perpetrated by an individual who would have otherwise been detained or deported in the absence of the sanctuary policy. The bill passed two Senate committees this week and is anticipated to be voted on at the full Senate in the near future. The bill is noteworthy in another respect given that Senate leader Phil Berger is a primary sponsor of the legislation. The Senate leader and House Speaker rarely sign on as primary sponsors of legislation, and doing so is a sign of their strong public support.



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