



March 7, 2025 | nclm.org

Disaster Assistance Legislation

This week, the state Senate approved its version of the latest disaster relief package to address the needs of communities hit by Hurricane Helene in western North Carolina. [HB 47 Disaster Recovery Act of 2025 – Part I](#) would provide \$535 million, roughly \$35 million more than approved in the House version last week. The most significant difference in the two bills comes in the form of great support for farmers' crop losses. The Senate has also proposed routing more funding through local governments for infrastructure repairs to support small businesses and debris removal.

With the Senate approval of the bill, the House can now accept those changes, or reject them and force negotiations for a compromise plan. The legislation would become the fourth Helene disaster recovery bill approved by the General Assembly.

In other action, an oversight committee made up of members of the Senate and House continued to criticize the executive branch's disaster recovery leadership. Lingering displeasure from the recovery effort in the wake of Hurricanes Matthew and Florence colored the questioning and remarks from committee members intent on seeing a speedier recovery effort, particularly reconstruction of homes. That issue sparked impassioned remarks from lawmakers addressing questions about whether homes can be reconstructed in flood plains and flood ways, on land that may have been in families for generations. Representatives of Gov. Josh Stein's administration told lawmakers that faster permitting processes, both at state agencies and local governments, is needed.

Finally, work continues at the N.C. Dept. of Commerce to develop an action plan required by federal regulations affecting the recovery effort. The Department will continue to take public comments through March 20, with details available on the department's [Disaster Recovery website](#). A helpful overview of the administrative process from the UNC School of Government is also available [here](#). Local governments are encouraged to participate in the action plan development.

House Advances Local Elections Bills,

Cabarrus Municipal Partisan Elections Proposal Stalls

A series of local elections bills advanced through the House this week, with measures affecting elections in Simpson, Oriental, Madison, China Grove, Kittrell, and Faith clearing both the [House Election Law](#) and [House Rules](#) committees before receiving full House approval on Wednesday. These bills – thought to be requested by the municipalities or noncontroversial -- now move to the Senate, where they await committee assignments and further consideration.

Meanwhile, [HB 271 Partisan Elections/Muni./Cabarrus Co.](#), which would have shifted municipal elections in Cabarrus County from a nonpartisan to a partisan basis, was pulled from consideration by the bill sponsor. The decision followed swift grassroots engagement from municipal officials who voiced concerns about the proposal and emphasized the importance of local decision-making in municipal election processes.

Municipal officials support protecting the ability to determine election formats, districts and other election matters currently under their purview. Learn more about the League's member-driven Legislative Goals at [NCLM's Legislative Hub](#).

LEO Special Separation Allowance Proposal Clears House Committee

[HB 50 LEO Special Separation Allowance Options](#), passed out of its first committee this week as legislators seek to make changes to employee benefits laws in order to better retain law enforcement officers (LEOs). The measure establishes an alternative special separation allowance for state and local law enforcement officers who complete at least 30 years of creditable service. By offering a more tailored retirement benefit, the bill aims to incentivize veteran LEOs to delay retirement, preserving institutional knowledge and strengthening local law enforcement agencies. The bill now heads to the [House State and Local Government Committee](#), where it awaits its next hearing.

Extension for Directed Grants

NC House members advanced [a bill](#) this week that included an extension for spending “directed grants” funding appropriated in the 2022 budget bill. Cities received many of these directed grants, which paid for hundreds of water, sewer, and other infrastructure projects. The extension would allow additional time to spend those funds, through June 30, 2026. [HB 74 House Budget Technical Corrections](#) passed the House Wednesday and now heads to the Senate for its consideration.

NCLM Board of Directors Nominating Period Open

The period to nominate members to the NCLM Board of Directors is now open and will run through March 31. As a member-led and member-driven organization, electing strong leadership is an essential member responsibility. The League's Board of Directors represents a diverse group of cities and towns of all sizes, from the mountains to the coast. Together with the entire membership, the board is dedicated to representing the interests of all members and leading the League as one voice for cities and towns working for a better North Carolina.

Please encourage qualified candidates to run for the board. If you are interested in serving as an officer or director, please submit a [candidate nomination form](#) before 5 p.m. on Monday, Mar. 31, 2025. You can view the elections timeline, Nominating Committee, open positions, and learn more about the process at Election.NCLM.org.



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