

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL DRH30252-LG-135A

Short Title: Recognition of the Tuscarora. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Goodwin.

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO RESTORE OFFICIAL RECOGNITION TO THE TUSCARORA AND TO
PROVIDE THEM REPRESENTATION ON THE COMMISSION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.

Whereas, the passage of Senate Bill 642 by the 1971 General Assembly created the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, recognizing the existence within the State of certain named Indian tribes and also acknowledged the fact that members of other Indian tribes reside within the State; and

Whereas, the Tuscarora were recognized through treaties with the North Carolina government, but were not among those tribes recognized in 1971; and

Whereas, the Tuscarora were a powerful tribe at the time of the English settlement of the land that became North Carolina and Virginia and their prominent role in the early history of both states is well documented; and

Whereas, the Tuscarora and the Cherokee are the only tribes to hold treaties with the North Carolina government; and

Whereas, the King of the Tuscarora was the signatory of the 1712 General Articles of Peace and the 1714 Sun and Moon Peace Treaty and these treaties helped establish a lasting and prosperous peace between The Tuscarora and the government and citizens of North Carolina; and

Whereas, the Tuscarora signed a stand-alone Treaty in 1717 with Governor Eden that reserved 56,000 acres of historic Tuscarora territory in Bertie County exclusively for the Tuscarora known as Indian Woods and in 1748 legislation reestablished the official boundaries and drew a map of its proximities; and

Whereas, for two centuries, parcels of Indian Woods were allotted to descendants of the Tuscarora Tribe and they have persisted as communities of Tuscarora People since that time and have reorganized and incorporated into The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories and appointed a tribal council to represent all North Carolina Tuscarora; and

Whereas, a review of historical documents and testimony confirmed the current Tribal Council of The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories consists of descendants of the historical Tuscarora Tribe; and

Whereas, the Tuscarora and its descendants contributed and continue to contribute to the settlement and growth of the State of North Carolina, have maintained their ethnic background, original language and culture and number among themselves families with names well-known throughout the area and the State; Now, therefore
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 71A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:



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"§ 71A-7.3. The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories; rights, privileges, immunities, obligations, and duties.

The Indians who comprise The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories, whose ancestors signed treaties with the government of North Carolina and were granted the Indian Woods Reservation on the Roanoke River in Bertie County, shall, from and after July 1, 2025, be designated and officially recognized as The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories, and they shall continue to enjoy all their rights, privileges, and immunities as an American Indian Tribe with a recognized tribal governing body carrying out and exercising substantial governmental duties and powers similar to the State. The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka shall be recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians. The Tuscarora shall maintain individual enrollment criteria, providing an opportunity for all North Carolina Tuscarora descendants to enroll and shall govern themselves in a manner that will benefit and unify all Tuscarora that come under their governance."

SECTION 2. G.S. 143B-407 reads as rewritten:

"§ 143B-407. North Carolina State Commission of Indian Affairs – membership; term of office; chairman; compensation.

(a) The State Commission of Indian Affairs shall consist of two persons appointed by the General Assembly, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Assistant Secretary of Commerce in charge of the Division of Employment Security, the Secretary of Administration, the Secretary of Environmental Quality, the Commissioner of Labor or their designees and ~~24~~23 representatives of the Indian community. These Indian members shall be selected by tribal or community consent from the Indian groups that are recognized by the State of North Carolina and are principally geographically located as follows: the Coharie of Sampson and Harnett Counties; the Eastern Band of Cherokees; the Haliwa Saponi of Halifax, Warren, and adjoining counties; the Lumbees of Robeson, Hoke and Scotland Counties; the Meherrin of Hertford County; the Waccamaw-Siouan from Columbus and Bladen Counties; the Sappony; the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation of Alamance and Orange Counties, The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories, and the Native Americans located in Cumberland, Guilford, Johnston, Mecklenburg, Orange, and Wake Counties. The Coharie shall have two members; the Eastern Band of Cherokees, two; the Haliwa Saponi, two; the Lumbees, three; the Meherrin, one; the Waccamaw-Siouan, two; the Sappony, one; the Cumberland County Association for Indian People, two; the Guilford Native Americans, two; the Metrolina Native Americans, two; the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, ~~one, one;~~ the Triangle Native American Society, ~~one, one;~~ The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuaka Territories, two. Of the two appointments made by the General Assembly, one shall be made upon the recommendation of the Speaker, and one shall be made upon recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Appointments by the General Assembly shall be made in accordance with G.S. 120-121 and vacancies shall be filled in accordance with G.S. 120-122.

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SECTION 3. G.S. 143B-135.5 reads as rewritten:

"Part 30A. American Indian Heritage Commission.

"§ 143B-135.5. American Indian Heritage Commission established.

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(b) Members. – The Commission shall consist of ~~42~~13 members. The initial board shall be selected on or before February 1, 2022, as follows:

- (1) One representative recommended by each of the following tribes: Coharie, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Haliwa-Saponi, Lumbee, Meherrin, Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, Sappony, The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenuauaka Territories, and Waccamaw-Siouan.

(2) One representative recommended by each of the following organizations: Cumberland County Association for Indian People, Guilford Native American Association, Metrolina Native American Association, and the Triangle Native American Society.

(c) Terms. – The members recommended by the Coharie, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Haliwa-Saponi, and Lumbee Tribes and the members recommended by the Cumberland County Association for Indian People and the Guilford Native American Association shall serve initial terms of two years expiring on June 30, 2023. The members recommended by the Meherrin, Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, Sappony, and Waccamaw-Siouan Tribes and the members recommended by the Metrolina Native American Association and the Triangle Native American Society shall serve initial terms of three years expiring on June 30, 2024. The member recommended by The Tuscarora Indians of Kahtenauaka Territories shall serve an initial term of two years expiring on June 30, 2027. Upon the expiration of the terms of the initial members of the Commission, each member shall be appointed to terms for three years and shall serve until a successor is appointed.

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SECTION 4. This act is effective when it becomes law.