

**COMMENTS BY  
GOVERNOR BOB SCOTT**

**Announcing Executive Order Number 3  
Designating Seventeen Multi-County Planning  
Regions for North Carolina  
May 7, 1970**

During the past several years, I have become more and more aware of the need for some type of uniform system of multi-county regions for planning and development activities of all levels of government in North Carolina.

We already have a variety of private and public planning and development organizations at town, county, multi-county, and regional levels. There are multi-county regional planning commissions and councils of governments.

The 29 counties in the Appalachian Program are divided into seven local development districts. There are three economic development districts in eastern North Carolina. Each of these districts has between six to ten counties.

We have 11 area-wide comprehensive health planning agencies and 19 comprehensive area manpower planning system areas. There are 21 local law enforcement planning units.

In addition to all of these organizations, the State has been divided over 70 different ways by State agencies for special purposes.

All of these organizations and divisions were created in response to real problems facing our towns, counties and cities. However, it should be obvious that the time has come for a more orderly approach to the organization of multi-county planning and development activities of the local, State and Federal agencies.

The provision of quality public services such as schools, health and medical facilities, libraries, highways, and police protection for all of our citizens must be coordinated at all levels of government.

The distinction between rural and urban America is becoming less and less meaningful. For years, our people have fled the rural areas in search of employment in the urban centers of the nation. Serious problems have resulted from this mass migration.

Now, with improved transportation and communication, large numbers of our people continue to live in rural areas and commute to the urban centers for employment and cultural, recreational, and entertainment activities. Thus, the trade areas of our larger cities and towns have been extended into the surrounding countryside.

We also see a trend for industry to decentralize so that, in varying degrees, our rural areas are now parts of larger economic communities. Urban centers provide many public and private services which would be extremely costly if provided in a sparsely settled rural community.

These economic communities, in almost every instance, encompass more than one county. This economic and social interdependence requires a spirit of cooperation between counties, municipalities, State and Federal governmental agencies as we prepare to meet the challenge of the year 2000.

I stated in my first legislative message to the General Assembly that only through partnership with the State can local governments provide the services our citizens demand and deserve. I also said that one of the highest priorities during my administration would be efforts to build an effective partnership between all levels of government.

Accordingly, the 1969 General Assembly passed legislation authorizing the North Carolina Department of Administration to work cooperatively with the counties, cities, towns, and Federal agencies to develop a system of multi-county planning regions.

Today, I am pleased to announce the designation of 17 multi-county planning regions for the State of North Carolina.

The good work that has been accomplished through present cooperative arrangements between counties and municipalities will not be displaced nor undermined by this uniform system of multi-county planning regions.

It is our desire to establish a framework within which individual communities can provide the needs of their residents and quicken the pace of development.

The staff of the State Planning Division under the direction of Mr. Ronald Scott in the Department of Administration has worked long and hard in studying ways to establish the regional boundaries that would take into account the interdependencies of the various counties, towns and cities.

The following factors were used in reaching a tentative decision about where boundaries should be established:

1. The economic and social interrelationships between urban centers and the surrounding areas,
2. Existing cooperative programs among counties and municipalities,
3. At least three counties in each region,
4. A population base of at least 100,000 people in each region, and
5. The existence of mountain ranges or rivers that might separate one region from another.

The establishment of the regional boundaries was not done in isolation at the State level. We have involved people from all levels of government. The Department of Local Affairs assisted the State Planning Division by holding a series of meetings across the State to explain the ideas and concepts to local officials and interested people.

A map showing tentative boundary lines was mailed to over 2,000 local government officials and other leaders interested in multi-county organizations of one form or another. We invited these officials to give us the benefit of their thinking and to express their wishes.

Naturally, we were not disappointed in the number of responses that came back to us. Problem areas were identified from these comments and suggestions. Personnel in the State Planning Division resolved these problems through telephone conversations, and in many instances, personal visits with county commissioners.

Dr. William Turner, Director of Department of Administration, with my approval, appointed an advisory committee to council with the State Planning Division as they reached, a final decision on boundary locations. This advisory committee, composed of representatives of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, the League of Municipalities, the Institute of Government, North Carolina State University, appropriate state agencies, and chaired by Dr. Leigh Hammond, North Carolina Field Director of the Coastal Plains Regional Commission, has played a key role in moderating the various points of view.

There is statutory authority for five different types of comprehensive multi-county organizations. These are:

1. Joint Planning arrangements among local planning boards
2. Regional Planning Boards
3. Economic Development Commissions
4. Planning and Economic Development Commissions
5. Council of Local Governments

It is possible that the next General Assembly will want to review the existing situation and see where additional legislation may be necessary in order for these planning regions to function effectively.

I would like to again emphasize that this system of planning regions will help achieve a goal which I have stated many times for my administration. This goal is to modernize and streamline government, particularly on a State and local level. I have said many times that State and local government must be strengthened, especially in its relation to the Federal government. We must have a stronger voice and a greater influence in the Federal system. These planning and development regions can serve a foundation for that strength.

As we move into the decade of the seventies and approach the dawn of a new century, we must have a unified effort to formulate programs that will lead to the good life for all North Carolinians.

Initially, we were not disappointed in the number of responses that came back to us. In fact, we were surprised by the number of responses that came back to us. In fact, we were surprised by the number of responses that came back to us.

On Friday, the 15th of September, the Director of Department of Agriculture, with my assistant, departed in a private car to attend to the Council with the State Planning Commission. The following day, the 16th of September, the Director of Agriculture, with my assistant, departed in a private car to attend to the Council with the State Planning Commission.

1. The Council of Ministers
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