

Brief NC History of Mandating Renewable Energy

2007: [Senate Bill 3](#) — which mandated increasing amounts of renewable energy. Although this was well-intentioned, it had two major failings: **a)** none of the four justifications for this bill made at the time actually hold up under close scrutiny, and **b)** there were several unintended negative consequences.

2013: [House Bill H298](#) — a major attempt to reign in SB-3. This got pulled from the floor due to political disagreements.

2015: [House Bill H681](#) — was another attempt to fix SB-3. A technical (PCS) version lost in the Public Utilities Committee by one vote. See [here](#) for details.

2015: [House Bill H760](#) — is a larger bill (Regulatory Reform Act) where the key parts of H681 were added to it (Section III). Other parts of this bill pertained to non-energy matters.

The first discussion and debate of the renewable energy provisions of H760 occurred on the House floor, not in a committee. [Note: for a bill to pass, it requires three “readings,” and three majority votes.]

H760 First Reading

On Wednesday night 4/29/15 there was a long House session that discussed and voted on numerous bills. Here is the [video](#) of the entire session

0:59 — Rep Jeter introduced an [amendment](#) to allow the Renewable Energy provision (i.e. parts of H681) to be added to H760. There are several questions and challenges made by other Representatives over the next 20 minutes.

1:20 — The amendment passed 97 to 19. Here are the [details](#) of that vote.

H760 Second Reading

This occurred at about 1:30 AM in the morning, later in the same session where the amendment was originally introduced. This [passed](#) 80 to 31.

H760 Third Reading

This was scheduled to take place on 2:00 PM on Tuesday May 6th. Due to the importance of this bill, it was the only one planned for that session. Following the amendments inclusion in H760 on 4/29/15, there were **intense** behind-the-scenes political negotiations with a variety of stakeholders (esp the solar industry). At the last minute, the Tuesday 5/6/15 session was cancelled, and rescheduled for the next day.

On Wednesday, the start of the session was again delayed, due to more political negotiations. Here is a [video](#) when it finally began. Then during the Third Reading there were more delays, again due to last minute attempts by renewable proponents to get concessions from the bill sponsors. To their credit, the House leaders stuck to the premise that their primary obligation was to the citizens, businesses, military and environment of the state — not the promotion of a niche business.

1:27:15 (see [video](#)) — Rep Millis: outlines the renewable energy provisions of H760. He also emphasizes the important military connection — i.e. how one of the side effects of SB-3 was conflicts between the military and wind energy.

Democrats submitted four amendments to H760, to undermine the efforts to fix SB-3 and to remove or undermine the energy provisions of the bill. A typical example was Amendment #6, from Rep Harrison (to revert to the rules of SB-3) is worth watching, and is at **1:57:40** in the [video](#). This was voted down, 39 to 70 (which included two Democrats).

Amendments #7, #9 and #10 were also attempts to derail the energy provisions of H760. Fortunately all failed, by wide majorities. To see the details of these amendments, including the vote specifics, see this [page](#).

2:41 (see [video](#)) — After all the amendments are dealt with, there is finally a vote on H760. **It PASSES 77 to 32!** This was supported by all Republicans, plus seven sensible Democrats. (See vote [specifics](#).)

Here is an [article](#) about the Third Reading of H760 (the final House session for this bill), written by a left-leaning journalist.

House bill 760 now goes to the NC Senate. The talking points outlined for the original version (H681) still all apply:

1 - [General Talking Points](#) & 2 - [Military Talking Points](#)

2015: [House Bill H332](#) — in an another surprising turn of events, the renewable energy parts of H760 were put into yet another bill: H332. It was scheduled for one hearing: the Senate Finance Committee. This is the official legislative [staff summary](#) of that bill. Here is a [story](#) about this transition from the left leaning WRAL.

On Wednesday 5/20/15 this bill came before the Finance Committee. The chairperson limited discussion on the renewable parts, and only had a voice vote. Here is the [interpretation](#) by the pro-renewable WRAL reporter. This [story](#) is from a similar pro-renewable journalist at the *Charlotte Observer*.

On Thursday, 5/21/15 there was a separate (but related) renewable energy dispute regarding the state budget. Representative Marilyn Avila (an ally) introduced an amendment in the House regarding extending solar tax credits ([here](#) is an explanation). Unfortunately, that failed (here is the [vote](#)).

At the moment, the full Senate floor vote for H332 is not scheduled for a floor vote yet, although it could be at any time. The talking points outlined for the prior versions (H681 /H760) still all apply to this latest iteration:

- 1 - [General Talking Points](#)
- 2 - [Military Talking Points](#)

Assuming H332 successfully passes in the Senate, there will be a House/Senate conference committee that will iron out any differences between the bills passed by the two bodies. Since these do not seem to be large, we are optimistic that this can be resolved equitably.

After a long delay, an important [meeting](#) was held in early September to nudge the Senators to take action on H332.

Recommendation:

Contact NC State Senators to support the H332 measure.

John Droz, jr 9/11/15