

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2007**

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**SENATE BILL 967**

Short Title: NC Organic Economic Opportunities Study.

(Public)

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Sponsors: Senators Cowell; Atwater and Bingham.

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Referred to: Commerce, Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

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March 20, 2007

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE TO CONTRACT  
2 WITH A MARKET RESEARCH FIRM TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF THE  
3 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES OF EXPANDING AND DEVELOPING  
4 ORGANIC AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION, MARKETING, AND  
5 SUPPORTING BUSINESS ENTERPRISES IN NORTH CAROLINA.  
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7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8 **SECTION 1.** The Department of Commerce shall contract with a market  
9 research firm with experience in thorough and comprehensive organic marketplace  
10 analysis to conduct a study to identify the current status of organic agriculture in North  
11 Carolina and describe opportunities for and challenges to a rapid expansion and  
12 development of organic production, marketing, and supporting business enterprises in  
13 North Carolina, including the potential job growth and economic impact and benefits  
14 for the State. The study shall identify infrastructure needs, as well as any potential  
15 obstacles, whether in public policy or other areas that might hamper the expansion of  
16 organic agriculture production, marketing, and supporting business enterprises. This  
17 study shall include all of the following:

- 18 (1) A supply-side analysis of the current status and supply of organic  
19 products, inputs, and value-added processing in North Carolina that  
20 includes the number of farms engaged in producing organic products,  
21 inputs, and value-added processing; the acreage involved in producing  
22 organic products, inputs, and value-added processing; the production  
23 systems of these farms and business enterprises; information about  
24 who owns these operations, itemized by categories of owners and to  
25 include the number of women and minorities who own these  
26 operations and the age ranges of the owners of the farms, with  
27 comparisons made to conventional growers in the State.

- 1           (2)    A demand-side analysis of how much and which types of organic  
2           products are being sold by retail grocery stores in the State and where  
3           these products currently are produced.
- 4           (3)    If the potential of local growers is maximized to meet the increasing  
5           demand for organic products, the potential economic benefits for  
6           North Carolina. The potential economic benefits shall address, at least,  
7           the potential for new jobs, increased farm and associated businesses  
8           revenues for processing and distributing organic products, increased  
9           retail revenue, tourism, increased tax revenues, and any other  
10          economic benefits.
- 11          (4)    If the potential of local growers is maximized to meet the increasing  
12          demand for organic products, the identification of needs and  
13          opportunities for new and existing input suppliers and providers of  
14          processing, distribution, marketing, education, research, and  
15          infrastructure needs.
- 16          (5)    The economic impact of any expected social and environmental  
17          benefits associated with expanding the transition to organic farming  
18          systems, to include anticipated increases in farmland preservation and  
19          job growth in rural North Carolina and reductions in carbon emissions.
- 20          (6)    Overall economic potential and opportunities for growth of the organic  
21          sector in North Carolina.
- 22          (7)    Any other issues the Department of Commerce considers pertinent to  
23          this study.

24           **SECTION 2.** No later than May 1, 2008, the Department of Commerce shall  
25   report the results of the study under Section 1 of this act to the Senate Committee on  
26   Small Business and Entrepreneurship and to the Fiscal Research Division.

27           **SECTION 3.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
28   Department of Commerce the sum of one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars  
29   (\$125,000) for the 2007-2008 fiscal year to fund the costs of the study under this act.

30           **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2007.