

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2025**

**H**

**1**

**HOUSE BILL 649**

Short Title: County Tier Designation Study Bill. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Johnson and Reives (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: State and Local Government, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 2, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO DIRECT THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLABORATORY TO STUDY THE  
EFFECTS OF VARIOUS PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE COUNTY TIER  
DESIGNATION SYSTEM.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.(a)** The North Carolina Collaboratory at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Collaboratory) shall study the potential effects of the changes outlined in this act on the county tier designation system under G.S. 143B-437.08.

**SECTION 1.(b)** The study shall focus on the following proposed changes to the county tier designation system under G.S. 143B-437.08:

- (1) Changing the criteria used to rank counties.
- (2) Changing the way in which tier designations are assigned.
- (3) Changing the time frame in which counties are ranked.

**SECTION 1.(c)** The study shall evaluate the impact of the proposed changes listed in subsection (b) of this section on the following:

- (1) The rankings of all 100 counties.
- (2) Programs that use the tier designation system for their administration.
- (3) The ease of doing business in the State.

**SECTION 1.(d)** The Collaboratory shall consult with the following agencies to conduct the study required by this act:

- (1) The Department of Commerce.
- (2) The Department of Health and Human Services.
- (3) The Department of Public Instruction.

**SECTION 1.(e)** The study shall evaluate whether the proposed changes listed in subsection (b) of this section:

- (1) Align with the State's economic development goals.
- (2) Use current, reliable, timely, and high-quality data.
- (3) Implement a methodology that is easy to understand.
- (4) Accurately identify areas of distress.

**SECTION 2.** No later than December 31, 2025, the Collaboratory shall submit a preliminary report of the results of the study required by this act to the Joint Legislative Economic Development and Global Engagement Oversight Committee (EDGE) and the Fiscal Research Division (FRD). No later than December 1, 2026, the Collaboratory shall submit a final report of the results of the study required by this act to EDGE and FRD.



1

**SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2025.