

Chatham County



2026 LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST



2026 Top Legislative Priorities



Restore Local Down-Zoning Authority



Background: The Recode Chatham Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), Moncure Small Area Plan, and Plan Chatham aim to balance growth and preservation by directing development to designated areas while protecting agricultural and conservation lands. However, SL 2024-57 (Senate Bill 382) restricts the County's ability to manage growth effectively by limiting zoning adjustments. It defines downzoning as any action that decreases density, reduces permitted uses, or creates nonconformities in non-residential districts, constraining local flexibility. Without legislative changes, Chatham County cannot fully implement the Board of Commissioner's adopted UDO, delaying progress on rural preservation and reducing sprawling development patterns.

Request: Amend or repeal SL 2024-57 downzoning restrictions to restore local authority over land use decisions, ensuring responsible and balanced growth that aligns with Chatham County's long-term vision - OR - Implement legislative action to allow implementation of the Chatham County UDO as adopted.

Protect Local Government Revenue



Background: Local governments rely heavily on property tax revenue to fund essential services such as public education, emergency services, infrastructure, and social services. As the General Assembly considers potential reforms to North Carolina's property tax system, it is important that any changes maintain the stability and predictability of local government revenues. Proposals that alter reassessment schedules, restrict valuation methodologies, or limit local authority over tax policy could create fiscal uncertainty for counties and reduce their ability to respond to community needs. Ensuring that all property owners are taxed fairly, including addressing gaps such as the Blue Ridge loophole, is also important to maintaining stability within the property tax system.

Request: Ensure that any property tax reforms considered by the General Assembly protect the fiscal stability of counties, preserve local authority to manage property tax systems, and close the Blue Ridge loophole to ensure fair and consistent taxation of property.

Support State Budget Passage and Funding for SNAP & Medicaid

Background: North Carolina counties rely on the State Budget to fund and administer critical health and human services programs. The federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1) enacted in 2025 shifts significant administrative responsibilities and costs for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid to states and counties without providing additional federal funding. These changes include new work requirement verification processes and increased eligibility determinations that will significantly increase administrative workloads for county Departments of Social Services. In North Carolina, the proposed administrative cost shift for SNAP alone represents approximately \$69 million statewide and an estimated \$350,000 annual increase for Chatham County.

Request: Adopt a State Budget that provides sufficient funding to support the administration of SNAP and Medicaid programs. Specifically, support funding solutions that maintain SNAP service levels for food insecure North Carolinians and stabilize the Medicaid program by protecting Medicaid Expansion and providing resources needed to implement new federal administrative requirements.

Support Affordable Housing Efforts

Background: Housing affordability is a critical issue in North Carolina, with Chatham County ranking as the most expensive for homebuyers. In February 2026, the median home sale price was \$880,000, and rising rental costs further limit affordable options. Addressing this crisis requires bold strategies, including a State Housing Tax Credit to incentivize private investment and preserve affordability as LIHTC properties near the end of their mandated periods. Additionally, state grants for local affordable housing programs would empower governments to develop targeted solutions and scalable pilot projects.

Request: We request the establishment of a state housing tax credit aligned with the federal LIHTC program to support affordable housing development, particularly in rural areas. Additionally, we request the creation of a dedicated funding source to assist local governments in developing innovative affordable workforce rental programs that address unique local challenges and expand access to stable, affordable housing.

Protect Local Authority

Background: North Carolina counties need local authority to govern effectively on land use, public health, and development. However, state laws increasingly preempt local control, limiting flexibility in zoning, environmental protections, and infrastructure planning. Local governments are best equipped to address community needs and support sustainable growth.

Request: Oppose state legislation that restricts local decision-making on zoning, environmental protections, and public safety. Support efforts to restore county authority over planning and regulatory decisions, allowing local governments to address community priorities effectively. Preserving local control is essential for smart growth, economic resilience, and a higher quality of life for residents.