NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY
1979 SESSION

CHAPTER 1003
HOUSE BILL 1122

AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR PRELIMINARY STEPS TO ESTABLISH A MOUNTAIN EXPERIENCE CENTER.

Whereas, the mountains of North Carolina are a major natural and economic resource of the State and nation, and attract great numbers of visitors each year from both within and without the State; and

Whereas, much of the mountain land is in private ownership, but a considerable amount is owned by various agencies of the United States and of the State of North Carolina, including the National Park Service, the United States Forest Service, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the North Carolina Parks and Parkway Development Commission; and

Whereas, there has long been great need among federal and State land management agencies to have a joint facility in Western North Carolina to greet the visiting public and to provide a unified means of informing visitors of available facilities and attractions and their status of usage; and to coordinate with this service information as to privately owned tourist facilities; and

Whereas, there is a need for a comprehensive educational center to inform visitors as to the history and culture of the mountains, native water and water- based life, soils, forests and plants, wildlife, weather, and similar matters, so as to develop a better appreciation of Western North Carolina's culture, environment, economy, and ecology, and to demonstrate means of enjoying and managing these resources without depleting or destroying them; and

Whereas, in the period from May to October, 1982, the project "Energy Expo '82" is scheduled to be held in Knoxville, Tennessee, and is expected to attract 13 million or more visitors to the mountains, many of whom can be expected to visit the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and other areas in Western North Carolina along Interstate Highways 40 and 26, along the Blue Ridge Parkway, and along smaller routes as well; and

Whereas, the United States Government has tentative plans for substantial development of a visitor and educational center in the Western North Carolina area, and it is important that State and local governments and private persons and organizations participate to make the center of maximum value to all concerned; and

Whereas, the development of such a center can occur only if proper planning precedes actual construction; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Administration the sum of one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars ($125,000) for fiscal year 1979-80 as a reserve to be made available as needed to be used to fund studies, planning, and preliminary work as required to establish, in cooperation with the federal government and private persons and organizations, a Mountain Experience Center in Western North Carolina. The Department of Administration shall not release the funds appropriated under this act until a written agreement is signed by the appropriate federal agency or agencies which provides that federal funds in the amount of five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000) are available and have been committed to this project; provided, if federal funds are pledged in a lesser amount, the

Department of Administration is authorized to release an amount equal to twenty-five percent (25%) of the federal funds pledged by the written agreement. Funds remaining in the reserve at the end of fiscal year 1979-80 shall not revert but shall be retained by the Department of Administration until federal funds are appropriated and made available for the development of the Mountain Experience Center.

Sec. 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 1979.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified, this the 8th day of June, 1979.