# GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA SESSION 2007

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#### HOUSE DRH70737-LG-736\* (5/15)

Short Title:Asheville Art Museum Expansion Funds.(Public)

Sponsors:Representatives Fisher, Goforth, and Thomas (Primary Sponsors).Referred to:

#### A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

2 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO EXPAND THE ASHEVILLE ART3 MUSEUM'S FACILITIES.

Whereas, founded in 1948, the Asheville Art Museum's mission is to engage and inspire individuals and enrich the community through dynamic experiences in American art of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The museum's vision is to transform lives through art; and

8 Whereas, the museum promotes the integration of the arts into the daily life 9 of Western North Carolina and the Southeast, provides opportunities for access to, 10 experience with, and enjoyment of, the finest visual arts through meaningful programs 11 and provides professional stewardship of its collections and its other resources. It is a 12 place of education, exploration, and inspiration, an advocate for the arts and artists, an 13 economic engine, and the preeminent arts resources for the city, county, region, and 14 across North Carolina; and

15 Whereas, the museum is the only art museum serving the 24 counties of Western North Carolina. Between 2006 and 2007, 88,635 people participated in 16 17 museum programs, including visitors from 49 states. Last year, the museum provided 18 residents, visitors, cultural tourists, students, and teachers with more than 41,000 contact 19 hours of arts programming. Over 15,700 children in grades K-12 from across Western 20 North Carolina were served by the museum's valuable and otherwise unavailable programs. The museum partners with Asheville City Schools and the county school 21 22 systems of Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Macon, McDowell, Mitchell, 23 Transylvania, and Yancey to provide programming, which promotes the arts in and of 24 themselves and as viable and successful means of teaching core competencies. In some 25 cases, museum educational programming is the only arts education these students 26 receive; and

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1 Whereas, data gathered through a 2004 study commissioned by the museum 2 indicated that at that time the museum annually generated an average of \$2.7 million in 3 local economic impact, including \$63,000 in local government revenue, a positive 4 impact that benefits Western North Carolina each and every year; and

5 Whereas, total museum participation exceeded 1.2 million people between 6 2001 and 2007. The museum's permanent collection grew from 900 to over 2,200 works 7 of art between 1996 and 2008, yet only 3% of the work held on behalf of Western North 8 Carolina can be exhibited at present because of space limitations; and

9 Whereas, the museum has outgrown its current facility in Pack Place and 10 must increase public education and exhibition space to continue to meet the region's 11 needs. This is crucial if the museum is to continue in a leadership role in the 12 developmental, educational, and economic health of downtown Asheville, Buncombe 13 County, and the Western North Carolina region; and

14 Whereas, the planned expansion project, with a preliminary construction cost 15 of \$18 million, will have a significant positive economic impact. It will generate as much as \$31.7 million in regional economic impact, with up to 80% of construction 16 17 funds spent locally. Direct spending in the community by museum participants on 18 parking, meals, and retail is anticipated at \$4.7 million in the first year following 19 expansion and at similar levels in subsequent years. The expanded museum will be a 20 new cultural destination for important special exhibitions, education programs, 21 entertainment, retail, and dining – an education and economic engine in the heart of 22 Asheville; and

Whereas, the museum is working with renowned architect James Stewart Polshek, local architects, and community members to design a dynamic facility that will preserve the historic Pack Library Building, create a destination for the State's bestknown arts region, and anchor the new Pack Square Park; and

Whereas, the museum has already received gifts and pledges totaling \$4.7 million, including vital support from the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority, planning grants from both Buncombe County and the City of Asheville, and has been named a priority project in the Hub Project plan and by the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce; and

Whereas, the State demonstrated commitment to the project with an initial appropriation of \$25,000 during the 2005 legislative session. The museum has also received \$11,300 in planning grants from the North Carolina Arts Council; Now, therefore,

36 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

37 **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Asheville 38 Art Museum Association, Incorporated, a nonprofit organization, the sum of two 39 hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) for the 2008-2009 fiscal year to help the 40 museum complete the schematic design phase of the expansion project. Expansion of 41 the museum's current facilities will provide the museum with additional space for 42 changing and permanent collection exhibitions, educational public programs, 43 community meetings, media presentations, lectures and performances, retail sales, and 44 storage. The Asheville Art Museum is the only visual arts organization of its kind

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- 1 serving the 24 counties that comprise Western North Carolina, an area of 10,601 square
- 2 miles with a population of 1,386,871, representing sixteen percent (16%) of the State's
- 3 population and twenty-two percent (22%) of the land area in North Carolina.
- 4 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2008.