

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2001**

**SESSION LAW 2001-501  
SENATE BILL 1038**

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE LANDOWNERS TO INITIATE A SPECIAL PROCEEDING TO CLARIFY THE EXISTENCE OF A RIGHT-OF-WAY OPEN TO THE PUBLIC ADJACENT TO THEIR PROPERTY WHEN THE PUBLIC RECORDS ARE UNCLEAR CONCERNING THE ACTUAL EXISTENCE OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY AND TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO CONDEMN LAND FOR SECONDARY ROAD PAVING OR MAINTENANCE PROJECTS WHEN SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT OF THE ADJACENT LANDOWNERS AGREE TO PROVIDE NECESSARY RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR THE PROJECT.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** Article 7 of Chapter 136 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 136-96.1. Special proceeding to declare a right-of-way dedicated to public use.**

(a) A special proceeding under Article 3, Chapter 1 of the General Statutes may be brought to declare a right-of-way dedicated to public use if:

- (1) The landowners of tracts constituting two-thirds of the road frontage of the land abutting the right-of-way in question join in the action;
- (2) The right-of-way is depicted on an unrecorded map, plat, or survey;
- (3) The right-of-way has been actually open and used by the public; and
- (4) Recorded deeds for at least three separate parcels abutting the right-of-way recite the existence of the right-of-way as a named street or road.

(b) In a special proceeding brought pursuant to this section, the clerk of court shall issue an order declaring the right-of-way to be dedicated to public use upon finding that the provisions of subsection (a) of this section have been proven.

(c) Any right-of-way found to be dedicated to public use pursuant to this section that is proposed for addition to the State highway system shall meet the requirements of G.S. 136-102.6.

(d) This section shall not apply to any right-of-way established by adverse possession or by cartway proceeding."

**SECTION 2.** G.S. 136-44.7 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(c) When it is necessary for the Department of Transportation to acquire a right-of-way in accordance with (a) and (b) of this section in order to pave a secondary road or undertake a maintenance project, the Department shall negotiate the acquisition of the right-of-way for a period of up to six months. At the end of that period, if one or more property owners have not dedicated the necessary right-of-way and at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the property owners adjacent to the project and the owners of seventy-five percent (75%) of the road frontage adjacent to the project have dedicated the necessary property for the right-of-way and have provided funds required by Department rule to the Department to cover the costs of condemning the remaining property, the Department shall initiate condemnation proceedings pursuant to Article 9 of this Chapter to acquire the remaining property necessary for the project."

**SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.  
In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 5<sup>th</sup> day of  
December, 2001.

s/ Beverly E. Perdue  
President of the Senate

s/ James B. Black  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley  
Governor

Approved 7:25 p.m. this 19<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2001