

Powell Bill ^[1]

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by W. Lee Johnston Jr., 2006

The Powell Bill was the successful product of a 15-year fight by the [League of Municipalities](#) ^[2] to have the state of North Carolina fund the building and maintenance of major city [streets](#) ^[3]. Senate Bill 120, as it was known to legislators, was introduced on 30 Jan. 1951 by Junius K. Powell of Whiteville and 37 other state senators. After Governor [William Kerr Scott](#) ^[4] recommended an additional one-cent gasoline tax to fund the proposed measure, the Powell Bill became Chapter 260 of the 1951 General Statutes of North Carolina on 15 Mar. 1951.

Section 1 asserted that city and town streets were part of the state public roads system and would be constructed, reconstructed, and maintained by the [State Highway and Public Works Commission](#) ^[5] from state [highway](#) ^[6] funds. Section 2 provided additional money (taken from a half-cent gas tax) directly to municipalities-based on their population and street mileage-to maintain, repair, and construct city streets that were not part of the state highway system. Since the Powell Bill's ratification in 1951, minor changes have been made, generally increasing allocation to cities under Section 2.

Reference:

John Alexander McMahon, "Roads and Streets in North Carolina: Report to the State-Municipal Road Commission," *Popular Government* (September 1950).

Additional Resources:

"State Street-Aid (Powell Bill) Program" North Carolina Department of Transportation.
http://www.ncdot.gov/programs/Powell_Bill/ ^[7] (accessed June 15, 2012).

Subjects:

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Authors:

[Johnston, W. Lee, Jr.](#) ^[10]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[11]

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