

North Carolina Needs Impact Fees — Growth Should Pay for Itself!

North Carolina is experiencing rapid growth, and nowhere is that more visible than in Brunswick County — one of the fastest-growing counties in the entire United States. That kind of expansion brings opportunity, but it also puts enormous pressure on roads, water and wastewater systems, stormwater infrastructure, and schools.

Yet under current state law, counties have almost no ability to require new development to help pay for the infrastructure it relies on. That leaves long-time residents footing the bill while developers benefit from publicly funded systems they don't contribute to.

It's time for North Carolina to allow **impact fees**, so growth finally pays for itself.

Impact fees are simple and fair. When new homes or commercial buildings are built, a portion of the cost of expanding roads, water and sewer capacity, stormwater systems, and emergency services is covered by the development that creates the demand. Most fast-growing states already use them. North Carolina should too.

Brunswick County's extraordinary growth highlights the problem:

- Rapid development is outpacing infrastructure upgrades
- Road congestion is worsening across the region
- Water and wastewater systems face increasing strain
- Stormwater and flooding risks rise as natural buffers disappear
- Schools struggle to keep up with enrollment

These challenges aren't unique to Brunswick County — they're happening across North Carolina. But Brunswick's explosive growth makes the issue impossible to ignore.

Allowing counties to implement impact fees would:

- **Protect taxpayers** by shifting costs to growth instead of existing residents
- **Support responsible development** instead of unchecked sprawl
- **Improve long-term planning** for water, sewer, roads, and schools
- **Ensure fast-growing counties don't fall behind**

North Carolina deserves a growth model that is sustainable, fair, and fiscally responsible. Impact fees are a proven tool — and it's time for the General Assembly to give counties the authority to use them.