

# Waste bills go back to committees

By SHARON KEBSCHULL  
Staff Writer

Bills calling for the removal of North Carolina from a nuclear waste disposal commission and the possible placement of a waste site in three counties were sent back to committees for further discussion in the N.C. General Assembly Wednesday.

A bill calling for North Carolina to pull out of the Southeast Compact Commission, sponsored by Sen. Joe Mavretic, D-Edgecombe, was sent back to the Air and Water Resources Committee after legislators discussed the costs for the state to take care of its own waste. Legislators have threatened to pull out of the com-

mission if the commission does not reach an agreement on penalties for states that try to pull out.

North Carolina is set to sponsor a site for the eight-state commission in 1992.

Mavretic also proposed an amendment requiring that only Mecklenburg, Wake and Brunswick counties be considered for the disposal sites. These counties were highlighted because they are the only counties receiving more than \$3 million in property taxes from a nuclear power plant.

Capt. William Briner, one of the two representatives to the compact, said the entire state benefits from the

plants.

The continuing debate is having an "adverse effect" on the commission, Briner said.

At the commission's last meeting, some states said they understood the need for sanctions on states pulling out of the compact but also felt North Carolina needed to "show a little faith" of its own, he said.

UNC Geology professor Daniel Textoris said the reason Wake County would be a good idea, excluding the political aspects, is that the Shearon Harris power plant owns about 10,000 acres of land set up for waste disposal in the Trassic Basin, which is prime land for such

a site.

"Wouldn't it be a noble gesture for them to give a couple hundred acres of their land for use?" he said, adding that the site is also close to the Harris plant and roads ideal for transportation of the waste.

Textoris said the criteria of where to place a disposal site includes an area that is not heavily populated but near a highway or train route for transportation, an area of a few hundred acres, and, most geologically important, a place where the waste can stay dry.

Land with high clay content is ideal because it does not allow rain in, he said.

# Local jails to take in more inmates

By RUTH DAVIS  
Staff Writer

Gov. Jim Martin's emergency order to reduce the N.C. prison population will transfer the overcrowding problem to local jails, which are already packed to full capacity, officials at the Orange County Sheriff's Department said Wednesday.

Martin ordered the state Parole Commission last week to release at least 787 inmates to reduce the prison population from 18,067 to 17,280. Under legislation passed by the N.C. General Assembly in March, the commission must comply by May 25.

The Parole Commission will review cases of misdemeanors — those involving false pretense, lar-

ceny and other non-violent property crimes — and decide which inmates will be transferred to jails or paroled early to comply with the order.

Local jails are designed to hold people awaiting trials and do not have the resources for inmates, said Orange County Sheriff Lindy Pendergrass.

"The emergency order could have a real outstanding effect on us in that our jail is equipped to house 42 inmate-type people," he said. "... Now they're saying jails must provide work release programs. That puts the county jails into the business of being correctional institutions."

Pendergrass said the jails could have been prepared to deal with additional inmates if they had been warned of the problem a few years ago when the state became aware of the overcrowding.

"I understand what the state's doing and I'm not in disagreement with them," he said. "But not having prior planning really has an effect."

By pleading guilty to lesser offenses and gaining shorter sentences, Pendergrass said felons and repeat offenders could take advantage of the pressure on the prisons.

"We're just going to have to play a constant catch-up game and hope we can work it out," he said.

Maj. Don Truelove said the

emergency order would have a catastrophic impact on the jail.

"The Orange County jail is one of the smaller jails in the state and it is already packed," he said.

To discuss the burden on local jails and possible ways to handle it, N.C. Department of Correction Secretary Aaron Johnson will meet with a committee of local sheriffs and county commissioners, said Director of Public Affairs Jim Marable.

"(Transferring prisoners) may cause a small amount of overcrowding in the county jails. But Secretary Johnson intends to work closely with local sheriffs on watching (the transferred misdemeanors and early parolees) closely," Marable said.

Marable said the Parole Commission will use sound judgment to decide which inmates will be paroled.

"The Parole Commission will, case-by-case, try to choose the most appropriate inmates," he said. "There will be no mass releases, so the public does not have to worry. The parolees will be monitored closely."

Calling the situation in prisons "an emergency," Gordon Whitaker, acting chairman of the curriculum in criminal justice and associate professor of political science at UNC, said coordination between federal courts and local governments

must be achieved.

"It appears that some of the inmates will move out early or be held in county jails," he said. "There is a problem with this because the county jails are overcrowded, but the federal courts are not aware of that problem."

Whitaker said the state will eventually have to spend more money on prison and jail construction. But cost and finding locations make prison construction an unpopular issue, he said.

The state should find programs to serve as alternatives to incarceration, said District Attorney Carl Fox.

"There are some people in prisons who shouldn't even be there. They should be in programs, such as first-offender programs," he said.

He said the pressure to avoid overcrowding will probably not make much of a difference on the ability to get an offender convicted.

Jack Betts of the N.C. Center for Public Policy said the state should expand the alternatives to incarceration to divert prison-bound offenders, as well as releasing present inmates. Also, by not housing misdemeanors, prisons might be less crowded, he said.

He said the state was aware of the problem years ago and should have started planning then.

# Democrats override veto with Sanford's vote change

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — The Senate rejected a personal, last-minute plea from President Reagan and voted Thursday to override his veto, enacting into law an \$88 billion highway and mass transit bill.

Democrats reclaimed one vote by freshman Sen. Terry Sanford, D-N.C., which they had initially lost in a vote Wednesday.

The final 67-33 vote, exactly the necessary two-thirds majority, capped two days of political struggle over the bill that became a test of the wills of the Republican president and leaders of the Senate's Democratic majority.

Sanford's critical vote to override the veto ignited a political firestorm Thursday as Republicans blasted "Turn-around Terry," and Democrats defended his change of heart as an act of courage.

## News in Brief

Republican Gov. Jim Martin of North Carolina, who said prior to the vote he believed Sanford would vote to sustain the veto, said afterward he was "very disappointed."

### Kremlin claims defection

MOSCOW — The Kremlin announced Thursday that an American soldier and his West German wife had defected to the Soviet Union and had been granted asylum because the couple feared political persecution.

The U.S. Army in West Germany and the Pentagon in Washington could not confirm the defection, which would be the first by an American serviceman to the Soviet Union since the Vietnam War.

# AIDS-conscious group stresses blood-testing

By LAURIE DUNCAN  
Staff Writer

A national organization, which requires that its members undergo blood tests for the AIDS virus every six months, held its first meeting this week in Greensboro, the vice president of the group said.

The National Association of Responsible Single Adults is for single adults concerned about the spread of AIDS and for promoting good health, said Suzanne Williams, vice president of the organization's board of directors and one of the group's two organizers.

The association is a private organization that plans to offer social, educational and informational activities for single members, Williams said.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome is a fatal disease that cripples the immune system, leaving the victim susceptible to a variety of infectious diseases. It can be transmitted by having sex with an infected person or by sharing needles used to inject drugs.

Williams said the blood testing requirement was secondary to the group's main purpose of holding educational and well-run social functions. Joining the group would give concerned singles the option of getting away from the bar scene, she said.

Beside holding social functions, NARSA members can serve on working committees.

"That's the best way for people to meet each other in a non-threatening way," she said.

Results of the blood tests are confidential, which sets NARSA apart from similar groups that share members' results, she said.

The blood test is reliable in detecting the AIDS antibodies. "There is no blood test that is 100 percent accurate, but this one is 99

percent accurate," she said.

When tests show a person has AIDS, "responsible adults will take the knowledge of the test results and will not engage in trying to spread the virus," Williams said. Infected members are not expected to resign from the organization.

NARSA is creating a research and education foundation to provide the most current and accurate information about AIDS and other important health issues, Williams said.

The foundation will receive part of members' dues for donations to AIDS research and will eventually help pay for the biannual blood tests, Williams said.

A one-year adult membership costs \$150, and the biannual blood tests cost a total of about \$70, she said.

The membership fee includes six social functions a year and educational activities based on health issues and other topics of interest to the members, she said.

Youth memberships have the same benefits, but the yearly fee is \$60, and can be paid in two installments, she said.

The organization provides for setting up nationwide chapters, including youth chapters on college campuses, Williams said. Each chapter would be based on the organization's loose framework, but could function independently to serve the needs and desires of its members, she said.

Williams said NARSA chapters would be virtually autonomous, intuitively fair, non-discriminatory and would uphold the compassionate, caring and responsible philosophy that is the fabric of the organization.

Williams said she hoped to see NARSA expand its services to provide counseling for members who have been exposed to the virus.

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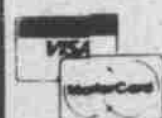
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