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BTC Brief

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STATE BUDGET WILL COST NORTHEASTERN NORTH CAROLINA 1,600 JOBS: “Right-sizing” state government downsizes region’s economy

*Timely,
accessible,
and credible
analysis of
state and local
budget and tax
issues*

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KEY FINDINGS:

- Northeastern North Carolina will lose \$1.74 in spending cuts for every \$1 it gains from tax cuts in the new biennial state budget.
- Taken together, the tax and spending decisions in the state budget will cost Northeastern North Carolina 1,600 jobs and \$65 million in lost labor income by FY2012-13 – and 45% of the jobs lost come from the private sector.
- The budget will damage rural Northeastern North Carolina more than urban regions in the state: for every one job the budget creates in Northeastern North Carolina through tax cuts, it kills 4.1 jobs, while urban Charlotte only loses 2.5 jobs from spending cuts for every job gained by tax cuts.

Background

On June 15, 2011, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted a biennial state budget for FY2011-13, overriding a veto by Governor Beverly Perdue. As reported by previous BTC analyses, this budget included \$4.6 billion in spending cuts over the biennium to core public investments like education, healthcare, and public safety. Despite facing an estimated \$2.6 billion revenue shortfall in FY2011-12,¹ the budget also contained an additional \$3.1 billion in total revenue reductions over the biennium, including the expiration of a temporary 1-cent sales tax, the expiration of temporary personal and corporate income surtaxes, and a permanent reduction in business income taxes, by exempting the first \$50,000 in business income.

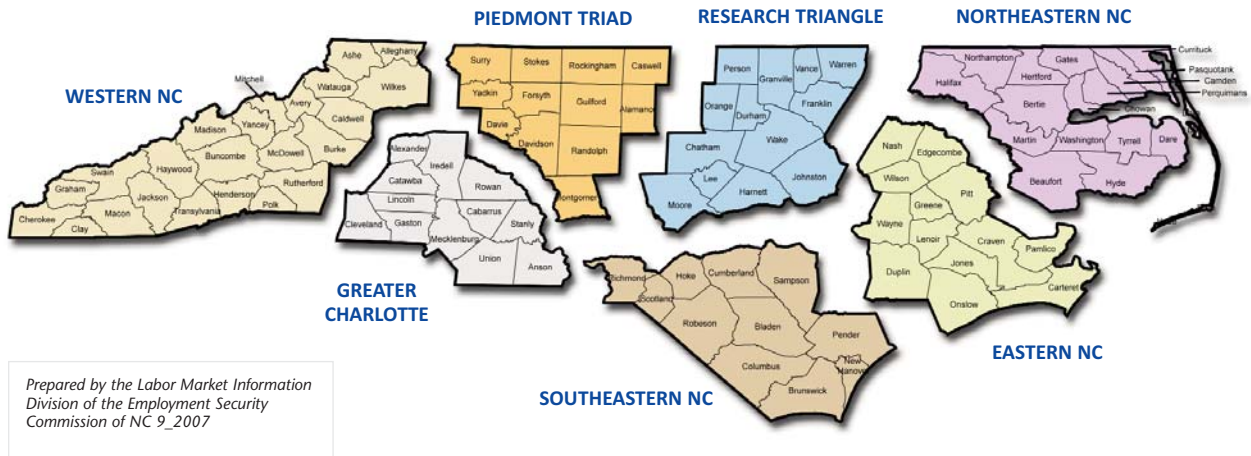
This BTC Brief uses industry-standard economic impact methods to estimate the effects of the biennial budget’s tax and spending changes on the state’s economy. Given that spending by the state government, businesses, and households in Northeastern North Carolina is different

METHODS

Using industry-standard economic impact analysis, this brief assesses the effects of the biennial budget’s spending and tax changes as distributed across each region for each fiscal year. In doing so, the spending side and the tax side are analyzed separately and then taken together to find the net effect on each region. This analysis was conducted using IMPLAN 3.0, an industry-standard input-output economic impact modeling software, coupled with the software’s proprietary 2009 data for the North Carolina economy. While limitations to this model exist, in terms of its ability to assess the actual behavior of households or businesses as a result of changes in policy, given its use during the 2011 budget debate and its reputation as an industry standard, the findings present a reasonable assessment of employment and economic impact. For a complete description of the modeling techniques and assumptions used in this brief, please see the Technical Appendix available at the BTC website:

<http://www.ncjustice.org/?q=node/26>.

FIGURE 1: NC's Seven Economic Development Regions



than in other regions in North Carolina, this report specifically analyzes the local economic impacts of these budget policies on the Northeastern region of the state.

North Carolina’s legislative leaders claimed the cuts to state spending would “right-size” government and boost economic growth. However, this “whole-budget” analysis finds that the negative consequences of the spending cuts far outweigh any positive effects of the tax-cut package in terms of lost jobs and lower labor income, demonstrating that “right-sizing” government will actually result in downsizing Northeastern North Carolina’s economy.

The Budget and Northeastern North Carolina

After adjusting for one-time inter-fund transfers and accounting mechanisms, Northeastern North Carolina will experience total real-spending cuts of \$73 million in FY2011-12 and \$94 million in FY2012-13, based on

FIGURE 2: Spending Cuts Experienced by Northeastern North Carolina

PROGRAM	FY2011-12	FY2012-13
State Education Spending, including K-12 & Higher Ed	\$-35,940,427	\$-36,042,242
All Other State Spending	-23,175,231	-30,668,820
Loss of Federal Matching Dollars (Medicaid & SCHIP)	-14,149,271	-26,798,940
Total Cuts	\$-73,264,928	\$-93,510,002

the region’s share of statewide employment in the industries affected by the budget’s program-specific cuts. In this analysis, every dollar in spending cuts represents a dollar taken out of the region’s economy. In contrast to this loss of money, Northeastern North Carolina will gain \$48 million in

new economic benefits from the tax cuts in FY2011-12 and \$54 million in FY2012-13. These tax benefits will accrue to households and businesses as additional income to be spent back into the economy for these specific years.

Unfortunately, the budget takes more money out of each region through spending cuts than it gives back to that region through tax cuts. Northeastern North Carolina is especially hard-hit, losing \$1.74 from spending cuts for every \$1 it gets back in tax cut benefits.

The Budget’s Economic Impact on Northeastern North Carolina

As a result, the depth of the budget’s spending cuts in Northeastern North Carolina eliminates any economic gains generated by the tax cuts. As seen in Figure 3, the budget will destroy more than 2,146 jobs in the region by 2013, more than four times the 523 jobs created by the tax cuts, leading to a total loss of

1,624 jobs and \$65 million in reduced labor income by 2013. At least 45 percent of these job losses will occur in the private sector, demonstrating the extent to which public-sector layoffs and spending cuts damage the private sector.

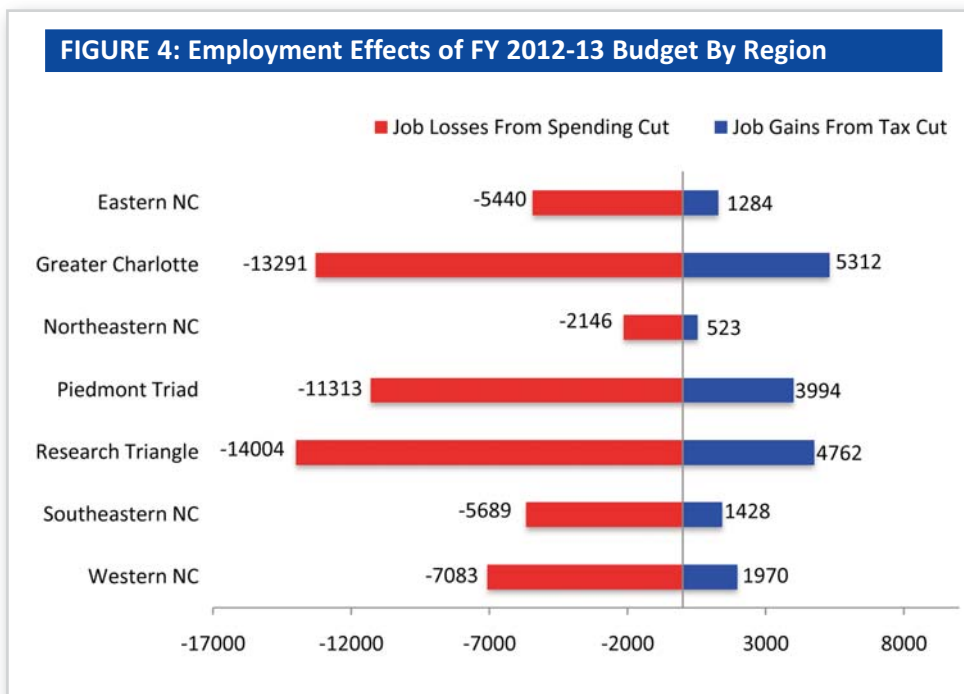
FIGURE 3: Whole-Budget Impacts on Northeastern North Carolina’s Economy

IMPACT TYPE	TOTAL EFFECT	PERCENT PRIVATE SECTOR
Employment	1,624	45%
Labor Income	\$64 million	38%

spending cuts destroy more jobs than are created through the tax package in every region across the state, this region faces a worse trade-off than the more urban regions of the state. For every one job the budget creates in Northeastern North Carolina through tax cuts, it kills 4.1 jobs through spending cuts, while an urban region like

As seen in Figure 4, Northeastern North Carolina is hit especially hard in comparison with the state’s more urban regions. Although the budget’s Charlotte only loses 2.5 jobs from spending cuts for every job gained by tax cuts.

FIGURE 4: Employment Effects of FY 2012-13 Budget By Region



Finally, it is worth noting that Northeastern North Carolina will lose 529 jobs through an unnecessary and shortsighted decision to cut North Carolina’s Medicaid and SCHIP programs, resulting in the loss of federal matching funds.

Conclusions

Based on this analysis, it is clear that the decision to “right-size” state government through deep spending cuts will

only serve to downsize the Northeastern North Carolina economy. The budget’s tax cut package is insufficient to balance out the jobs and labor income lost to misguided spending cuts. Compared to the urban regions in the state, these findings show this budget will hurt rural North Carolina, especially the Northeastern region

1 NC Budget & Tax Center. “The 2011-13 Final Budget - Neglecting a Balanced Approach, Budget Costs Jobs and Delays Economic Recovery.” June 2011. Available at <http://www.ncjustice.org/sites/default/files/BTC%20Reports%20-%202011-2013%20Final%20Budget.pdf> (page 6).