



## SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

June 25, 2024

Sen. Daniel Britt, Co-Chair  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
300 N. Salisbury Street, Rm. 525  
Raleigh, NC 27603

Sen. Warren Daniel, Co-Chair  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
300 N. Salisbury Street, Rm. 627  
Raleigh, NC 27603

Sen. Buck Newton  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
300 N. Salisbury Street, Rm. 520  
Raleigh, NC 27603

Dear Senators Britt, Daniel, and Newton:

The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) writes to express its strong opposition to H. 385. This legislation would lead to a substantial erosion of the protections for archaeological resources in North Carolina's coastal region and should be rejected by the Judiciary Committee.

The SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to research about and interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With more than 6,000 members, the SAA represents professional and avocational archaeologists, archaeology students in colleges and universities, and archaeologists working at tribal agencies, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. The SAA has members throughout the United States, as well as in many nations around the world.

It is our understanding that the impetus for this legislative initiative is a development project in Carteret County. Activities are being delayed due to the presence of the Cedar Point archaeological site. This location is one of the most exceptional and significant archaeological sites in the state and contains Native American human burials—five of which were disinterred accidentally during construction—and a Woodland period (1000 BC–AD 1600) village site. Further work is needed to fully research the 21-acre zone of environmental concern.

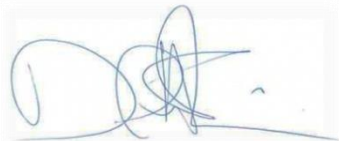
Specifically, the measure as it is currently written would impose a binding consultation on the Office of State Archaeology (OSA) that would suspend archaeological protections for three years on any property where the OSA does not confirm the possibility of archaeological significance. This potential change to existing law is unnecessary. Developers already have access to archaeological information that can inform their business decisions. According to the state's Department of Natural Resources, North Carolina's statutes for the protection of archaeological sites do not impede development activities. The OSA approves more than 95% of all permit requests under the Coastal Area Management Act with no requirement for archaeological survey work. Nearly all of the archaeological investigations that are recommended are resolved with little if any delay and expense to the permittee.

In addition, if passed the measure will actually cause more delays in the permit process rather than ameliorate them. The OSA is already significantly understaffed when it comes to completing the permit reviews that are required under existing law. A large new influx of consultations under this provision without addressing OSA's existing staff shortage will slow the permitting process for all state and federally permitted projects in North Carolina.

Finally, if passed, this bill would weaken what protections there are for archaeological resources in coastal North Carolina. Sites such as Cedar Point are the physical traces of those who came before us. Without the preservation of locations such as these and the information that they contain, our knowledge of and appreciation for the past, and thus of our own place and time, is irrevocably diminished.

The SAA strongly opposes H. 385 and urges the Senate Judiciary Committee to reject it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Sandweiss", is enclosed in a light blue rectangular box.

Daniel H. Sandweiss Ph.D., RPA  
President

CC: Senate Judiciary Committee