



NC TRAVEL NEWS

A weekly newsletter on North Carolina General Assembly news relevant to the North Carolina tourism industry

Jockeying at Jockey's Ridge

The article below was excerpted from *The Insider*, which published it on May 3.

A dispute between two regulatory entities has prompted lawmakers to step in to protect Jockey's Ridge on the Outer Banks, but senators worry it's just the beginning of being pulled into the weeds of rulemaking.

"I don't like to get into rulemaking," [Sen. Mike Woodard, D-Durham](#), said on Wednesday as the [Senate Agriculture, Energy, and Environment Committee](#) approved [House Bill 426](#), a small package of environmental changes. "I don't think that's the Legislature's job. But we got pulled into rulemaking on this one."

The NC Coastal Resources Commission included the area in a set of emergency protection rules rejected by the Rules Review Commission.

The issue is being litigated, said [Sen. Bobby Hanig, R-Currituck](#). "We have two entities that cannot agree on some statutes that the CRC put forward," he said.

[House Bill 426](#) was approved by the [Senate Rules Committee](#) on Thursday and next goes to the full Senate.

Summer Travel Plans in NC Polled

The article below was excerpted by the [Carolina Journal](#), which initially published it on May 3. The article was written by reporter [Brianna Kraemer](#).

Summer is on the horizon, and North Carolina remains a top destination for travelers.

For North Carolina-bound travelers, the beautiful scenery (74%) continues to be the most influential feature when selecting a destination, followed by the food and drink scene (60%), safety (59%), and outdoor/nature activities (59%).

Q10. Summer Travel Spending: Compared to one year ago, how will your spending on summer travel likely change?

	Freq.	%
My summer travel plans will not change from one year ago	202	33.7%
I plan to spend less on summer travel this year	260	43.3%
I plan to spend more on summer travel this year	92	15.3%
Unsure	46	7.7%
Total	600	100.0%

Although data from a recent [Carolina Journal](#) poll found that 43.3%

of North Carolinians plan to spend less on travel this year, the state's economic development organization, Visit North Carolina, is still expecting a small growth rate for 2024. The nonprofit estimates even spending intentions are up, with 67% of North Carolina prospects reporting expectations to spend more on travel in the next 12 months than they have in recent years.

"We are pleased that the summer travel forecast is positive for North Carolina," said Wit Tuttell, Visit NC's executive director. "As much as we always love to see percentages soar, expectations for even a small growth rate are welcome on top of the leaps and bounds we experienced in the aftermath of COVID."

Traveler sentiment is relatively unchanged from last year, while concerns surrounding inflationary pressures, gas prices, airport disruptions and COVID have all decreased from last year. When it comes to accommodations, hotel forecasted demand is flat this year but is expected to pick up in 2025.

"That being said, 2023 was a record-breaking year for room nights sold in NC," said Visit NC officials, noting more than 38 million rooms sold. "Looking at just the summer months, demand is expected to be up about 1 percent from last year, while revenues are expected to be up by about 3 percent."

The tourism industry in North Carolina generates over \$30 billion and created over 200,000 jobs. In 2022, North Carolina hosted approximately 43 million visitors, making it the sixth most visited state in the nation.