

NORTH CAROLINA SENTENCING AND POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION

REVISED POPULATION PROJECTIONS
FISCAL YEAR 2002/2003 to FISCAL YEAR 2011/2012

Prepared in Conjunction with the
Department of Correction's Office of Research and Planning

RELEASED: JANUARY 2003

INTRODUCTION:

The attached table shows ten-year prison population projections by fiscal year. The prison population projections were completed in two parts. The Sentencing Commission prepared prison population projections for all offenders sentenced on or after July 1, 2002 (new population). The Department of Correction prepared projections for all offenders in prison as of June 30, 2002 (resident prison population). The final combined projections take into account the decline of the resident prison population (structured sentencing releases, parole releases, and "max-outs") and the buildup of the new inmate population (new sentences, probation revocations, parole revocations, and post-release supervision revocations). Added to these figures is the estimated number of "safekeepers" and DWI offenders held in the state prison system.

ASSUMPTIONS:

- ▶ All Fair Sentencing Act (FSA) and pre-FSA prisoners will serve the same percentage of their Active sentence as the percentage served by prisoners paroled in FY 2001/02.
- ▶ On average, all Structured Sentencing Act (SSA) felons will serve 106 percent of their minimum Active sentences and all SSA misdemeanants will serve 95 percent of their Active sentences (the actual percentages served by SSA offenders released from prison during FY 2001/02).
- ▶ Rates of Active sentences will match rates during FY 2001/02 for all SSA offenders. Overall, 35 percent of felons received an Active sentence, with an average estimated time served of 42 months. These rates assume no changes in judicial or prosecutorial behavior regarding convictions.
- ▶ Probation revocation rates will match rates during FY 2001/02.

CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS PROJECTIONS:

The 2003 revised population projections are higher than the previous year's projections. In addition to an anticipated increase in growth in general, the projected increase in the prison population can be attributed to changes in two of the primary determining factors of the prison population: 1) an increase in the number of new convictions, which directly impacts the number of prison admissions

resulting from the commission of new crimes; and 2) FSA and pre-FSA inmates are serving longer sentences than previously projected.

- ▶ While the Sentencing Commission’s *Forecasting Advisory Group* found no reason to adjust the projected growth rate for misdemeanor convictions, the group adjusted the projected growth rate for felony convictions upward for the first year of the projection period.¹

<u>Time Period</u>	Felony		Misdemeanor	
	<u>Previous Growth Rate</u>	<u>Revised Growth Rate</u>	<u>Previous Growth Rate</u>	<u>Revised Growth Rate</u>
FY 2002/03	1%	2%	1%	1%
FY 2003/04	2%	2%	1%	1%
FY 2004/05	2%	2%	1%	1%
FY 2005/06	2%	2%	1%	1%
FY 2006/07	2%	2%	1%	1%

- ▶ An overall increase in felony convictions accounts for a large part of the higher population projections. This increase in felony convictions includes an increase in convictions for serious felonies (Classes A-D), with increases in convictions for certain specific offenses (such as murder, robbery, and drug trafficking).
- ▶ Prison population projections are and will continue to be affected by parole practices, due to a still-sizeable inmate population of FSA and pre-FSA offenders. On November 30, 2002, there were 6,314 FSA and pre-FSA offenders in prison (including 2,852 with life sentences and 107 with death sentences), representing about 19 percent of the state’s inmates. The percent of sentence served by FSA and pre-FSA prison releases (excluding those with life or death sentences) has been increasing (from 32% in FY 1997/98 to 39% in FY 2001/02), as has their average time served (from an average of 43 months in FY 1997/98 to 99 months in FY 2001/02).
- ▶ This projection includes impact from several legislative changes to criminal penalties from the 2002 Session of the General Assembly, including increasing punishments for financial identity fraud, incest, stalking, and several misdemeanor offenses.
- ▶ This projection does not include any increases in the prison population resulting from legislative changes that either created new offenses for which there are no historical data or amended penalties for existing offenses with elements that could not be modeled.

¹ The *Forecasting Advisory Group* convenes annually and consists of representatives from the Sentencing Commission, Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Correction, Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, State Bureau of Investigation, Governor’s Crime Commission, and Office of State Budget and Management. The group forecasts growth rates after reviewing recent crime trends, arrest trends, court filing trends, state demographic trends, and prison admission trends.

- ▶ This projection does not include any potential decreases in the prison population resulting from legislative changes that will permit the transfer of convicted offenders to the country of which they are citizens or nationals pursuant to international treaties.

PROJECTED PRISON POPULATION:

Projected Prison Population and Capacity

The population projected by the Commission's simulation model for June 30, 2002 was **33,188**. The actual average population for June 2002 was **33,111**, a difference of **77** prison beds (or less than one half of a percent). The first table and the following chart present the projected prison population and capacity for FY 2002/03 through FY 2011/12.

Updated prison capacity projections were provided by the Department of Correction's Division of Prisons in December 2002. These projections include both the Expanded Operating Capacity (EOC) and the Standard Operating Capacity (SOC) of all prison facilities. Based on these figures, the projected prison population will exceed both standard and expanded operating prison capacity for all ten years of the projection.

Projected Prison Population by Offense Class

The Sentencing Commission also provides data on the distribution of the projected prison population of felons by offense class, as shown in the second table. This distribution might serve as an indication of changing custody level needs.

NORTH CAROLINA SENTENCING AND POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION

**PRISON POPULATION PROJECTIONS:
UPDATED JANUARY 2003**

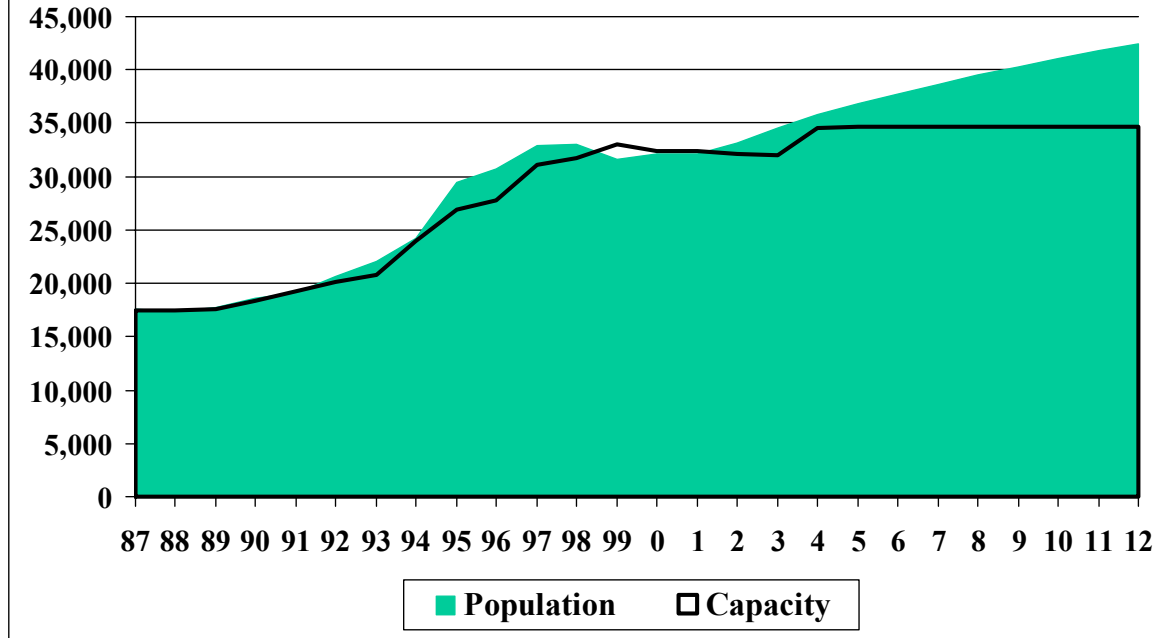
**PREPARED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTION'S OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND PLANNING**

FISCAL YEAR	PREVIOUS PROJECTION as of June 30	REVISED PROJECTION as of June 30	<i>ESTIMATE OF EXPANDED OPERATING PRISON CAPACITY¹</i>	<i>ESTIMATE OF STANDARD OPERATING PRISON CAPACITY²</i>
2003	34,129	34,570	31,969	28,501
2004	34,840	35,851	34,561	31,093
2005	35,647	36,787	34,729	31,261
2006	36,485	37,739	34,729	31,261
2007	37,405	38,687	34,729	31,261
2008	38,306	39,557	34,729	31,261
2009	39,203	40,345	34,729	31,261
2010	40,077	41,068	34,729	31,261
2011	41,052	41,768	34,729	31,261
2012	N/A	42,413	34,729	31,261

¹ Expanded Operating Capacity (EOC) is the bed space count yielded by calculating the number of general population single cells with one inmate per cell, the number of cells that house two inmates, and the number of inmates in dormitories operating at varying percentages beyond their Standard Operating Capacity (SOC) which is rounded up to the closest double bunk configuration.

² Standard Operating Capacity (SOC) is the bed space count yielded by calculating the number of general population single cells with one inmate per cell plus the number of inmates who can be housed in dormitories by dividing the gross square feet of each dormitory by 50 square feet and rounding to the closest double bunk configuration.

NC Prison Population and Capacity Updated January 2003



Note: Prison capacity figures reflect Expanded Operating Capacity.

SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission and NC Department of Correction

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**PRISON POPULATION PROJECTIONS:
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**DISTRIBUTION OF THE PROJECTED PRISON POPULATION BY OFFENSE CLASS
FELONIES ONLY**

Offense Class	Average Estimated Time Served in Months ²	Percent by Fiscal Year		
		2003	2007	2012
A	600	4.0	4.7	5.8
3 Strikes	600	0.0	0.0	0.1
B1	291	4.9	5.5	6.4
B2	193	6.2	7.6	8.9
C	102	21.1	22.6	22.4
D	76	16.1	15.9	15.2
A-D SUBTOTAL	134	52.3	56.3	58.8
E	34	5.8	6.1	5.8
F	24	7.9	7.6	7.1
G	19	11.1	10.3	9.8
E-G SUBTOTAL	23	24.8	24.0	22.7
H	11	16.6	13.8	13.0
I	7	4.2	3.9	3.8
H-I SUBTOTAL	10	20.8	17.7	16.8
Unknown	N/A	2.2	1.9	1.6
TOTAL	42	100.0	100.0	100.0

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

SOURCE: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, FY 2001/2002 Structured Sentencing Simulation Model

² For analysis purposes, the sentence length imposed for convictions resulting in life or death sentences was estimated at 600 months.