



## **Representative Roger West**

Rep. Roger West is serving his eighth term representing Cherokee, Clay, Graham and Macon counties in the N.C. House.

A plain-spoken and oftentimes amusing man, who can be found regularly in his office chewing on an unlit cigar, West has become infamous for his efforts to preserve the New Year's possum drop in Clay County. He was the sponsor of legislation in the House that exempted opossums from state wildlife laws from December 26, 2014 to January 2, 2015, and he has sponsored similar legislation this session.

As chair of the House Wildlife Resources Committee and Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources, West plays a quieter but more important role in approving House Republicans' spending plans for a variety of environmental and conservation issues – including funding for open space preservation, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' budget and for the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce.

West has regularly been a thorn in the side of the conservation community for his dogged opposition to investments in open space funding via the Clean Water Management Trust Fund and other state trust funds for state parks and important natural habitat areas. From his vantage point in his hometown of Marble in Cherokee County – and as a small businessman in the land clearing business – West is deeply skeptical of the need to preserve more open space, especially in western North Carolina, where, in his view, so much land is already in public trust. Protecting more land, he says, makes less available for development and takes land off local tax rolls for financially-strapped rural communities.

This session, West has also been involved in the ongoing debate over deer farming in North Carolina. West inserted an amendment into last year's budget to allow the importation of deer and other cervids into North Carolina after July 1, 2017, plus permit the sale of antlers, antler velvet and hides. Many have opposed the importation of deer to North Carolina because of the danger of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), which has killed thousands of animals as it spread across the country. The amendment also prevented the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission from using stronger standards to screen for CWD than those used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

West has been active in authoring and supporting legislation for the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians. This session he has introduced bills that would give the tribe exclusive authority to levy taxes within its jurisdiction, exempt property located on tribal lands from property tax, give the tribe authority to establish law enforcement

agencies and give the tribe's alcoholic beverage commission exclusive authority to issue permits to businesses on tribal lands.

A WNC native, West is a Vietnam War Veteran who served in the United States Navy. He is a small businessman who works as an environmental excavating contractor. Rep. West and his wife Judy have two adult daughters, Rachel and Megan. The Wests are members of Andrews United Methodist Church.

Historically, Rep. West has received low marks on important environmental votes as compiled by the NC League of Conservation Voters. His lifetime score as a legislator is 28. In 2014, he scored 0. For more information about the NCLCV scorecard and West's votes, visit:

<http://nclcv.org/what/scoring/>

For information about West's voting record on a range of issues, visit:

[www.wncvotetracker.org](http://www.wncvotetracker.org)

<http://votesmart.org/candidate/key-votes/41348/roger-west#.Vbj2D5NViko>

Rep. West has raised more than \$220,000 during his eight races for the N.C. House. Aside from personal contributions, West's top contributors include the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, Duke Energy and the N.C. Association of Rural Cooperatives. For more information about West's political fundraising, visit:

<http://followthemoney.org/entity-details?eid=5944305&default=lawmaker>

<http://votesmart.org/candidate/campaign-finance/41348/roger-west#.Vbj2RpNViko>

### **Other resources for Rep. Roger West**

NC General Assembly Contact Information

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General Assembly website:

<http://ncga.state.nc.us/gascripts/members/viewMember.pl?nUserID=267&sChamber=H>

Campaign website:

<http://nchouse120.com/>