



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES  
*of North Carolina*

## COVID-19/NCDOT Update 7-6-2020

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### **HB 77-DOT Reforms Becomes Law** Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 7/06/20

Gov. Roy Cooper announced Sunday that he's allowed the legislature's Department of Transportation reform bill to become law without his signature. House Bill 77 would cut about \$500,000 from the agency's budget in the wake of overspending issues and revenue shortfalls, while adding \$107 million for road maintenance and eliminating funding for mass transit. And it aims to add new accountability measures, including giving legislative leaders several appointments to the Board of Transportation, which is currently appointed entirely by the governor.

Cooper appeared to address some of those provisions in explaining why he didn't sign or veto the bill. "The Department of Transportation has faced unprecedented crises that have put a crunch on their budget, and the funds in this bill are critical to ensure they can maintain our roads and infrastructure," Cooper said in a news release Sunday. "However, I remain concerned about changes in transit funding and in board governance that distract from the work we must be doing together." The bill passed the Senate unanimously, and Sen. Mike Woodard, D-Durham, worked closely with Republicans to craft the legislation, which he says is a compromise. In the House, 17 Democrats voted against the measure. HB 77 is one of only four bills during this two-year session that Cooper has chosen to neither sign nor veto, allowing them to become law.

The announcement about HB 77 leaves just one bill remaining on Cooper's desk as of Sunday night: Senate Bill 168, the Department of Health and Human Services agency bill that has sparked protests over a provision that makes certain death investigation records confidential. Cooper has voiced concerns about that provision, and lawmakers appear poised to pass legislation to repeal that portion of the bill, which was otherwise not controversial.

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### **Atlantic Coast Pipeline Cancellation**

Duke Energy and Dominion Energy announced Sunday they are canceling plans for the 600-mile Atlantic Coast Pipeline that was to run through eight North Carolina counties. The natural gas pipeline faced intense opposition from environmentalists, but planners had just won a U.S. Supreme Court case that would have allowed the pipeline to cross the Appalachian Trail. Costs were originally estimated at \$5.1 billion, but ballooned to about \$8 billion. The pipeline was to run from West Virginia through Virginia and North Carolina, including in Northampton, Halifax, Nash, Wilson, Johnston, Sampson, Cumberland and Robeson counties. Duke Energy said it would advance its clean-energy goals with investments in renewable energy, battery storage, and other projects.

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### **House Passes \$1.5 Trillion Infrastructure Package**

On Wednesday, the House of Representatives passed its five-year, \$1.5 trillion infrastructure

package, the *Moving Forward Act*. The final vote was largely along party lines, 233-188, with three Republicans voting yes and two Democrats voting no.

The bill would authorize transportation, energy, water, brownfields, broadband, public housing, health care facilities, and public school construction programs over five years.

"The overall bill is a non-starter in the Republican-led Senate," said ACEC Vice President Transportation Programs Matt Reiffer, "but we hope it will unlock bipartisan progress on a surface transportation reauthorization, water resources development, and other initiatives.

Click [here](#) to read ACEC's statement about the legislation.

Click [here](#) to read the text of the *Moving Forward Act*.

Click [here](#) to read a section-by-section summary.

Click [here](#) to read a five-page fact sheet.

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