



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES
of North Carolina

NCDOT Call to Action June 23, 2020

Last week, House Bill 77 passed the Senate with unanimous support and will be up for consideration this week in the House. Securing immediate transportation funding solutions this session has been a position that ACEC/NC has advocated for, and we support [House Bill 77 \(DOT 2020-2021 FY Budget/Governance\)](#). The bill, originally introduced in 2019, was amended in the Senate last week to redirect \$700 million to DOT over the next fiscal year in the form of Build NC Bonds. It would also implement some commonsense oversight and accountability measures to bring more transparency to DOT's finances. Although it shifts funds to focus more on maintenance and construction efforts, the bill also would extend the deadline for the use of CARES Act stimulus dollars, previously authorized by NCGA in April, beyond the June deadline but prior to September 1, 2020, should the US Congress relax restrictions on use of the money.

We also continue to put our support behind [House Bill 1225 \(Education & Transportation Bond Act of 2020\)](#) as a medium-range solution to provide some much-needed funding for DOT in 2021 in the form of \$1.15 billion in general obligation bonds. The bill has been amended to create two separate votes on the November ballot, one to borrow money for transportation investments and one to borrow an additional \$1.95 billion for education funding, rather than the combined vote originally proposed. Both these bond initiatives would benefit horizontal and vertical infrastructure in North Carolina and benefit our member firms who practice in these areas.

House Bill 1225 passed the with strong bipartisan support and has been sent to the Senate. **ACEC/NC encourages you to reach out to your Senators and urge them to support this important bill ([who represents me?](#)).** When you speak to them, let them know that a growing state – like a good business – at times must borrow in order to grow, and there is no better time than now to do that borrowing as interest rates are at historic lows. **A vote for House Bill 1225 is a vote in favor of making headway on our medium-range funding needs so we can focus on looking ahead to more sustainable solutions.**

The bottom line is this: we cannot hope to achieve the long-term reforms we seek if we fail to fund vital transportation projects into the next year. We are moving in the right direction and building momentum on the reform piece – but right now, we need to focus on securing the investments available to us.

In addition, the NC Chamber and NC Chamber Foundation (of which ACEC/NC is part of the steering committee) are partnering on two studies to be released in the coming months that will support efforts to reform transportation funding in North Carolina. One study that will be released by the end of June is being conducted by TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit, and is looking at the conditions of North Carolina's roads, bridges, and interstates; the other, conducted by N.C. State's Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE), will consider a range of viable funding options and how they might be implemented to create a modernized, sustainable revenue stream for funding transportation projects in the state. In addition, the ACEC/NC Board of Directors has created a Task Force composed of engineering industry leaders to study and propose long-range sustainable solutions to the DOT funding program. These efforts, in addition to the work of the NC First Commission should provide much needed guidance and expertise to the efforts of the North Carolina legislature to solve the funding crisis hindering the state's attempt to develop a world class transportation system.

Thank you for your assistance and support in this vital effort!

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ACEC/NC is premier organization in North Carolina that represents the business interests of the engineering industry in our state. ACEC/NC's mission is to promote the business interest of engineer companies by providing legislative advocacy and business services.

