

Impact statement for northern part of proposed I-73 gets nod

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By Star & Enterprise Staff Reports
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S.C. Secretary of Transportation H.B. “Buck” Limehouse Jr. and Federal Highway Administration Division (FHWA) Administrator Bob Lee signed the final environmental impact statement for the proposed Northern I-73 project on Wednesday. In a press, Limehouse said “The signing of the FEIS represents over three years of work to identify the best overall route for I-73 through this region. We have reached an important milestone and look forward to seeking sources of funding, both public and private, so that I-73 may become reality.”

According to Lee, good communication and partnering were two factors that have made the project a success. Lee said it took about 36 months, as compared to the national average of 68 months, to have the impact study done and signed. The northern part of I-73 is 36 miles long and extends from I-95 in South Carolina to I-73/I74 in the Rockingham and Hamlet areas in North Carolina. This part of the project crosses Marlboro and Dillon counties in South Carolina and Richmond and Scotland counties in North Carolina. The southern portion of the proposed interstate is to run through Marion County and into Horry County. The Interstate is being built primarily to provide a quicker route from the northern states, as far away as Michigan, to the South and North Carolina coasts.

Approval of the environment impact statement is another milestone in the project’s progress. The next milestone is the upcoming Record of Decision (ROD), anticipated in October. Once that is issued, it is anticipated that the right of way acquisition will proceed for tracts that would be totally taken by the right of way footprint for the interstate.

A map of the preferred northern and southern routes of I-73 can be found at the I-73 Web site at <http://www.i73insc.com>.