

## I-73 group returns to Grand Strand

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The group of Grand Strand tourism, political and business leaders who went to Washington Tuesday to lobby for more interstate funding wrapped up their visit Wednesday.

All four Senators from the Carolinas attended the final power-packed meeting of the annual I-73/74 Corridor Association in Washington DC Wednesday.

Senator Elizabeth Dole (R-NC) says the interstate will be vital in North Carolina, now one of the faster growing states in the nation.

Before a private meeting in his Capitol Hill office, Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) told NewsChannel 15 the association's goals of a quarter billion dollars may be tough to meet.

"250 million dollars may be a bridge too far, no pun intended," Graham said. "But we're going to try to get as much federal funding as we can early on in the process to develop momentum for the actual construction, the more likely we are to get private investment construction."

During the meeting, Brad Dean, CEO of the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, gave a long list of reasons why I-73 is important, and the federal government seems to be listening.

"Clearly it's a project we're interested in," said Tyler Duvall, Assistant Secretary of Transportation. "We, at the same time though, have been talking extensively about new approaches to projects and that federal grants alone are unlikely to pay for the capital of most of these new highways in the United States."

With local VIPs in Washington, Graham stressed political unity as I-73 proceeds into the future.

"The one thing about road, water and sewer, it should be bipartisan," Graham said. "Because the benefits of roadways and water systems affect everybody, both parties and independent voters alike."

State Representative Alan Clemmons (R-Myrtle Beach) who lead the I-73 Corridor Association effort on this trip to Washington, called it a great success.

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