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I-73 WON'T ALLEVIATE AREA'S REAL TRAFFIC WOES

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Re S.C. Rep. Alan Clemmons' letter, "I-73 important to residents, visitors, economy," Dec. 15: Clemmons implied that the traffic problems on U.S. 501 and Carolina Forest Boulevard were the result of tourist traffic and would be relieved by the construction of Interstate 73. That is so wrong on both counts. The traffic on these two roads is predominantly local people doing local things. If no tourist ever used these roads, there would still be tie-ups every morning and evening from locals going to work, chauffeuring to school and shopping.

I-73 will not solve this problem. Remember when we were promised that S.C. 22, the so called Conway bypass, would solve this problem? Years after completion, it still has almost no traffic west of the Carolina Bays Parkway. Add to this multimillion-dollar waste the unnecessary cost for eight lanes of service roads along the eastern end of U.S. 501 and unused sidewalks the length of S.C. 544, and we could have had grade separations at every intersection on U.S. 501 all the way back to Conway.

Now our road experts tell us that U.S. 501 grade separations at Carolina Forest and Tanger are too expensive. Yet they fail to act on emerging situations at Gardner Lacy Road and at Singleton Ridge Road. These locations serve areas of major new residential construction. If they wait long enough, they also will be gridlocked and too expensive to fix. In the absence of new grade separations, a system of U.S. 501 parallel roads must be created to permit east-west movement of local traffic without depending on U.S. 501. Right of way should be acquired now while it still is mostly trees. Unfortunately our local and national politicians can't find any money for such work, but endless millions of dollars seem to be available for useless pork.

The writer lives in Conway.