

SCDOT, FHWA Leaders Approve Southern I-73

Environmental Impact Statement

South Carolina Secretary of Transportation H.B. "Buck" Limehouse Jr. and Federal Highway Administration Division Administrator Bob Lee signed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Southern I-73 Project on Thursday, November 29, 2007.

"The signing of the FEIS is the culmination of more than 3 years of work and represents the most significant milestone achieved to date for I-73," Limehouse said during the signing.

"The national average for approval of an environmental document of this magnitude is 5 to 6 years, but because of the partnerships in South Carolina, we were able to accomplish this milestone in a little over 3 years," Lee said.

The Southern I-73 Project is from I-95 in Dillon County through Marion County to SC 22 (Veterans Highway) in Horry County.

The FEIS represents a comprehensive assessment of all relevant human and environmental features within the project study area and results in the least overall impact alternative for I-73 in this area.

Approval of the FEIS, along with the upcoming Record of Decision document, allows for the right of way acquisition process to begin.

A draft environmental impact statement for the Northern I-73 Project was approved in July 2007. It is anticipated the final environmental impact statement for this project will be completed in spring 2008.

PHOTO Information: A high resolution image is available for download from the following web location: : <http://www.scdot-transfer.org/scdotphotos/I73EnvirSigning.jpg>

Photo caption:

Secretary of Transportation H.B. "Buck" Limehouse Jr., (seated left) and SC Division Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration Bob Lee (seated right) sign the Final Environmental Impact Statement on the southern portion of Interstate 73 in South Carolina on Nov. 29, 2007, in Columbia. Watching the agreement signing are, standing from left: SCDOT Environmental Project Manager Amanda Queen; LPA Group, Inc. Environmental Manager Heather Robbins; Wilbur Smith Associates Senior Environmental Planner Jennifer Pearson, SCDOT Pee Dee Regional Production Engineer Mitchell Metts and FHWA Environmental Program Manager Patrick Tyndall. (Photo by Rob Thompson/SCDOT). #####