

## **S.C. can go forward with plans for I-73**

Staff report  
Charleston Post and Courier

February 9, 2008

WASHINGTON — South Carolina can move forward with plans to build Interstate 73 now that the U.S. Department of Transportation has approved environmental documents for the project, U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters announced Friday.

With all federal clearances in place, South Carolina now can work on finding the money to start constructing this new section of interstate.

"Today this state joins the growing list of places that are embracing new and innovative approaches to finance transportation projects," Peters said.

Peters said I-73 in South Carolina was the first project to have a slot reserved under the Department's new Interstate System Construction Toll Pilot Program, which gives the state authority for tolling and allows other states to expand I-73.

Deputy Secretary of Transportation Thomas Barrett announced the news when he signed the Record of Decision for the project during a visit to Myrtle Beach to see the congestion chokepoints that the new I-73 potentially would ease.

"The I-73 Corridor will be a critical link tying the Grand Strand to states to the North," Barrett said. "It will expand the region's economy, increase tourism and enable faster trips to the region."

"Once completed, the new interstate will allow drivers to connect more easily to I-95," Barrett added.

U.S. Rep. Henry Brown was in Myrtle Beach for the announcement.

"Property acquisition for rights-of-way can begin for the southern route," Brown, R-S.C., said. "Through the diligence and cooperation of federal state and local agencies, I am confident that we will see I-73 become a vital route for the Grand Strand's residents and visitors."