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S.C. residents request a change in I-73 route

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HAMLET, S.C.

Residents at a second public hearing about the northern leg of Interstate 73 in South Carolina said they want to see the highway routed more to the west.

The S.C. Department of Transportation meeting was Tuesday night in Hamlet. Four miles of the South Carolina segment of the interstate are in North Carolina, where it will end at I-74.

The preferred route for the 30 miles of the new highway from Interstate 95 in South Carolina north is through western Dillon County into Marlboro County, skirting just to the east of Bennettsville before crossing into North Carolina.

The state has already chosen a route to take the new freeway from I-95 southeast to Myrtle Beach. The entire road is expected to cost nearly \$2 billion in South Carolina and take 10 years to complete once construction begins.

Five people spoke at the meeting. They want the highway to go farther west to bring more economic impact to such communities as Cheraw and Bennettsville.

Also, the western route is closer to an airport, hospital and other infrastructure, said Dottie Babb, a resident of Marlboro County.

Transportation officials will consider the comments along with field studies this fall as they determine if the agency's preferred route is the best plan, said Mitchell Metts, the I-73 project manager.

DOT officials have said they did not pick the western route because it would cost more and require more people to move.