

## **US DOT issues OK for construction of I-73 in South Carolina**

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Interstate 73 is one step closer to construction following the recent approval of an environmental document by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

If and when it is constructed, I-73 will be a brand-new interstate from Myrtle Beach, SC, to northern Michigan.

The DOT environmental approval allows South Carolina to begin constructing its portion of the new interstate, which may be built as a toll road according to statements made by DOT Secretary Mary Peters in a press release Friday, Feb. 8.

Peters said the environmental document clears the way for construction to begin.

Other states along the proposed route will have the option of tolling their portions of the interstate and will not need separate approval from the DOT.

The overall project is part of a pilot program administered by the Federal Highway Administration for adding tolling to the interstate system. Some of the programs apply to new construction while others allow tolling on existing interstates.

State and federal officials identified I-73 as a high-priority route in 1991, but state departments of transportation did not have the funding for the project to be built.

A group of elected officials, transportation officials, community leaders and residents formed the South Carolina I-73 Association to apply for tolling authority to speed up construction.