



January 30, 2006

Mr. Charles Harrison
S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

SUBJECT: I-73 Cooperating Agency Invitation

Dear Mr. Harrison:

As you are aware, the Federal Highway Administration (South Carolina Division) and the South Carolina Department of Transportation are preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Interstate 73 from the vicinity of Hamlet, NC southward to I-95 in Dillon County, SC. Since this project crosses the state line, the project team is working closely with the NC Division office of FHWA and the NCDOT, but both states have agreed that South Carolina will take the lead in developing the EIS.

As we discussed during the Scoping Meeting held on October 19, 2005, your agency is invited to become a cooperating agency for this project. As stated in 40 CFR 1501.6, the FHWA, as the lead federal agency, may request any other agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to an environmental issue to be a cooperating agency.

In accordance with the above stated regulations, the FHWA and SCDOT take this opportunity to formally invite your agency to become a cooperating agency for the I-73 Northern project. Attached are the CEQ Regulations 40 CFR 1501.6 that outline the duties of a lead agency and a cooperating agency. Please indicate, by signature at the bottom of this letter, your agreement to be a cooperating agency and return this letter. We look forward to working with you on this very important project. Please call Patrick at _____ or Mitchell at _____ if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Mr. Patrick Tyndall
FHWA Environmental Program Manager

Mr. Mitchell Metts, P.E.
SC Department of Transportation Project Manager

As a representative of the SC. PRT, I Charles Harrison
insert agency name *signature*
accept the invitation to become a cooperating agency on the I-73 Northern project.

cc: Skip Johnson, THE LPA GROUP INCORPORATED



January 30, 2006

Mr. Ronnie Feaster
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1835 Assembly Street, Room 950
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

SUBJECT: I-73 Cooperating Agency Invitation

Dear Mr. Feaster:

As you are aware, the Federal Highway Administration (South Carolina Division) and the South Carolina Department of Transportation are preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Interstate 73 from the vicinity of Hamlet, NC southward to I-95 in Dillon County, SC. Since this project crosses the state line, the project team is working closely with the NC Division office of FHWA and the NCDOT, but both states have agreed that South Carolina will take the lead in developing the EIS.

As we discussed during the Scoping Meeting held on October 19, 2005, your agency is invited to become a cooperating agency for this project. As stated in *40 CFR 1501.6*, the FHWA, as the lead federal agency, may request any other agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to an environmental issue to be a cooperating agency.

In accordance with the above stated regulations, the FHWA and SCDOT take this opportunity to formally invite your agency to become a cooperating agency for the I-73 Northern project. Attached are the CEQ Regulations *40 CFR 1501.6* that outline the duties of a lead agency and a cooperating agency. Please indicate, by signature at the bottom of this letter, your agreement to be a cooperating agency and return this letter. We look forward to working with you on this very important project. Please call Patrick at _____ or Mitchell at _____ if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

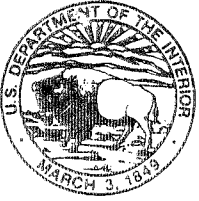
Mr. Patrick Tyndall
FHWA Environmental Program Manager

Mr. Mitchell Metts, P.E.
SC Department of Transportation Project Manager

As a representative of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, I Ronnie Feaster
insert agency name *signature*

accept the invitation to become a cooperating agency on the I-73 Northern project.

cc: Skip Johnson, THE LPA GROUP INCORPORATED



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200
Charleston, South Carolina 29407

October 26, 2005

Skip Johnson
LPA Group, Inc
P.O. Box 5805
Columbia, SC 29250

Re: Scoping Comments, I-73 Northern Phase

Dear Mr. Johnson:

This letter presents preliminary US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) comments on the northern phase of the proposed I-73 project in South Carolina. A Service representative was unable to attend the October 19, 2005, scoping meeting to present our comments at that time. Please use these comments to assist in alternative selection for the northern phase of I-73.

A review of the Heritage Trust database reveals two records for threatened and endangered (T&E) species occurring in the project area: the bald eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* and red cockaded woodpecker (RCW), *Picoides borealis*. The bald eagle record is current with a nest approximately two miles north of Bennettsville, SC. The RCW record, 5 miles northwest of Bennettsville, represents a historical cluster as the habitat once occupied by the RCW at this location no longer exists. However, potential habitat for the RCW as well as the bald eagle is common throughout the study area and should be considered during future I-73 environmental reviews.

The Service believes the restraints map does not reveal the true extent of carolina bays in the project area. Our review of National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps located a high number of bays that are not represented on the restraints maps. The Service requests that the restraints map be updated to include all carolina bays, either partial or intact, to help guide future corridor selection. Further, we suggest contacting NC Department of Natural Resources to obtain and incorporate all relevant information from their Heritage Trust data sources for Agency Coordination Team's (ACT) consideration.

Although the I-73 study area does not contain a National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), there are three private parcels within the area that have permanent conservation easements and are therefore considered part of the NWR system. One parcel is located immediately north of US 1 and adjacent to the Great Pee Dee River. The second parcel is located southwest of SC 9 near the Dillon / Marlboro County Line. The third parcel is located east of McColl, SC. All three of the parcels are managed through the Carolina Sandhills NWR. We will provide specific property boundaries for these parcels in an upcoming ACT meetings. The Service requests these three areas be considered a constraint to avoid impacts from the northern phase of I-73.

The Service appreciates the opportunity to provide preliminary comments on this project in its early planning phase and looks forward to continued cooperation with the ACT. If you have any questions regarding the Service's comments, please do not hesitate to contact Mark Caldwell

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edwin M. EuDaly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "E" at the beginning.

Edwin M. EuDaly
Acting Field Supervisor

EME/MAC/km

South Carolina

Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism

Chad Prosser, Director

October 11, 2005

Dan Dozier
CDR Associates
7910 Woodmont Avenue
Suite 805
Bethesda, MD 20814

Re: I-73 Concurrence on the Interagency Coordination Process

Dear Mr. Metts:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) have requested concurrence regarding the Interagency Coordination Process for the I-73 project. The Interagency Coordination Process has outlined the level of agency involvement, key decision points in the NEPA/permitting process, as well as a dispute resolution process. The goals of the Interagency Coordination Process are to increase agency and public involvement, develop a mechanism that leads to decisions that stick, improve process efficiency, merge NEPA and the Section 404/401 processes, meet or exceed agency mandates, and to enhance communication and relationships.

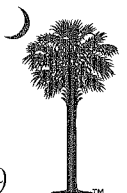
As a representative of S.C. Parks, Recreation & Tourism serving on the I-73 Agency Coordination Team (ACT), I agree with this approach and in turn provide my agency's concurrence on the Interagency Coordination Process. This concurrence is based upon the most current scientific information. If new scientific information becomes available that could affect the decision made, the concurrence may in turn be affected. In addition, this concurrence does not guarantee permit issuance.

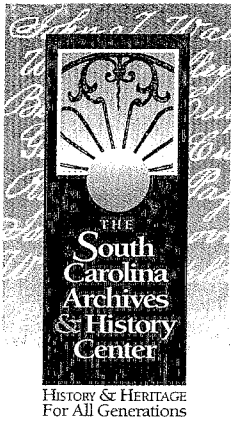
Sincerely,



Charles Harrison
Deputy Director

cc: Mitchell Metts





August 18, 2004

Mr. Mitchell Metts
Program Manager
South Carolina Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 191
Columbia, SC 29202

Re: I-73 Concurrence on the Interagency Coordination Process

Dear Mr. Metts:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) have requested concurrence regarding the Interagency Coordination Process for the I-73 project. The Interagency Coordination Process has outlined the level of agency involvement, key decision points in the NEPA/permitting process, as well as a dispute resolution process. The goals of the Interagency Coordination Process are to increase agency and public involvement, develop a mechanism that leads to decisions that stick, improve process efficiency, merge NEPA and the Section 404/401 processes, meet or exceed agency mandates, and to enhance communication and relationships.

As a representative of the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, serving on the I-73 Agency Coordination Team (ACT), I agree with this approach and in turn provide my agency's concurrence on the Interagency Coordination Process. This concurrence is based upon the most current scientific information. If new scientific information becomes available that could affect the decision made, the concurrence may in turn be affected. In addition, this concurrence does not guarantee permit issuance.

Sincerely,

David P. Kelly
Department of Transportation Project
Coordinator
SC State Historic Preservation Office

cc: Patrick Tyndall, FHWA



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Habitat Conservation Division
219 Fort Johnson Road
Charleston, South Carolina 29412

August 18, 2004

Mr. Mitchell Metts
Program Manager
South Carolina Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 191
Columbia, SC 29202

Re: I-73 Interagency Coordination Process Concurrence

Dear Mr. Metts:

This responds to your request concerning concurrence regarding the Interagency Coordination Process (ICP) for the I-73 project. The ICP outlines agency involvement, identifies key decision points in the NEPA/permitting process, and establishes a dispute resolution process. The goals of the ICP are to increase agency and public involvement, develop a mechanism that leads to firm decisions, improves efficiency, merges NEPA and the Section 404/401 processes, meets or exceeds agency mandates, and enhances communication and relationships.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), generally agrees with this approach and the provisions set forth in the ICP. In agreeing to abide by the ICP, NOAA Fisheries in no way relinquishes its responsibilities pursuant to requirements of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, nor do we agree to any provision that would involve transfer or sharing of our statutory responsibilities. We further note that our views will be based upon the most current and reliable scientific information and facts; however, if new scientific information or facts become available, then such information and facts may serve as a basis for modification of existing decisions.

Finally, I would like to use this opportunity to notify you that the NOAA Fisheries' technical representative has been changed. Mr. Prescott Brownell, Fishery Biologist, will replace Jocelyn Karazsia in this capacity. Additionally, please note that this concurrence letter represents the views of NOAA Fisheries' Habitat Conservation Division and that our Protected Resources Division may provide a separate response.

We look forward to working with you and the other agencies throughout this process. If further assistance is needed, please contact Prescott Brownell at the letterhead address, or by telephone

Sincerely,

David H. Rackley
Supervisor
South Atlantic Branch





United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200
Charleston, South Carolina 29407

August 17, 2004

Mr. Patrick Tyndall
Environmental Program Manager
Federal Highway Administration
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270
Columbia, SC 29201-2430

Re: I-73 Concurrence on the Interagency Coordination Process and Dispute Resolution

Dear Mr. Tyndall:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) have requested concurrence from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) regarding the Interagency Coordination Process for the I-73 project. The Interagency Coordination Process has outlined the level of agency involvement, key decision points in the NEPA/permitting process, as well as a dispute resolution process. The goals of the Interagency Coordination Process are to increase agency and public involvement, develop a mechanism that leads to decisions that stick, improve process efficiency, merge NEPA and the Section 404/401 processes, meet or exceed agency mandates, and to enhance communication and relationships.

The Service agrees with this approach and is providing concurrence on the Interagency Coordination Process. This concurrence is based upon the most recent information revealed and discussed during the August 12, 2004, coordination meeting in Columbia, SC. If new information becomes available that could affect the original decision, this concurrence determination may be affected and further consultation with the Service may be required.

Sincerely,

Timothy N. Hall
Field Supervisor

TNH/MAC