



1835 Assembly Street
Suite 1270
Columbia, SC 29201

Date: October 7, 2005

In Reply Refer To:
HDA-SC

Ms. Lisa LaRue-Stopp
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokees
2450 South Muskogee Ave.
Tahlequah, OK 74464

Subject:: Project Scoping: Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed Northern Portion of Interstate 73 (I-73) in South Carolina.

Dear Ms. LaRue-Stopp:

The proposed I-73 project in South Carolina is currently being developed as two separate projects, a southern project and a northern project. The southern project will begin at I-95 and end near the Myrtle Beach/Conway, South Carolina area. The northern project will begin in the Hamlet/Rockingham, North Carolina area and end at I-95 in South Carolina. Both sections will be developed under separate EISs. In September and November of 2004 correspondence was sent to the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokees inquiring any interest the Tribe may have in the proposed project. Mr. Stephen Mouse responded via e-mail on November 10, 2004 that the Tribe would be interested in the project. The Eastern Band of Cherokees have responded that the project lies outside of their ancestral lands in South Carolina and are not interested in the project. The southern project has progressed and potential corridors have been developed for that section. A preferred corridor has not yet been identified and the Draft EIS has not been issued.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in conjunction with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) plans to begin preparation of an EIS on the northern project and will hold an initial scoping meeting. Knowing that the Tribe would have difficulty making the trip we wanted to make sure we provided you with the information that would be handed out at the meeting and give the Tribe the opportunity to provide us with feedback on the project. Avoidance of any known archaeological or cultural site is of utmost importance in the development of this project. Any information you may have concerning any Native American cultural properties in the project study area would be very helpful in the early development of this project. A cultural report will be prepared for the project and will be forwarded to your office for review and comment.

An interactive web site has been developed for the proposed project and can be viewed at www.I73inSC.com. The site contains maps and status reports for the proposed project.

The other Native American Tribes that have shown an interest in this project are the Catawba Indian Nation, The Shawnee Tribe, The Tuscarora Nation and The Choctaw Nation.

Please do not hesitate to forward any comments or questions you may have to this office to Mr. Shane Belcher at _____ or by e-mail at _____

Sincerely yours,

Robert L. Lee
Division Administrator

Attachments

Cc: Mr. Wayne Hall, SCDOT
Mr. Mitchell Metts, SCDOT
Mr. Skip Johnson, The LPA Group

File: 47.205B