



For Immediate Release
JUNE 28, 2007

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Statement of Beau Mills, NC Go! Chair on National Study that Labels NC as 4th Worse in Traffic Congestion

A recently released national report on traffic congestion should serve as an urgent call to action for our state leaders. The report studied highways and state roads across the country and ranked urban highways in NC as the fourth worst in the nation in terms of congestion. This is national recognition we could do without and further evidence of what we already know – we have to invest more in our transportation system in North Carolina.

The Galvin Report to End Congestion that was released this week ranked North Carolina near the bottom of the study in terms of urban interstate congestion. Our businesses and families depend on safe, efficient travel on our highways. Traffic congestion leads to lost time, wasted money and increased air pollution from idling cars. North Carolina also tops the list in the study with regard to the number of miles maintained by state funding, but ranked as one of the most poorly funded of all per state owned miles (fourth lowest level of funding in the nation). So simply put, state leaders must show strong leadership if we are to avert a transportation crisis in our state.

The primary solution is obvious, but not simple - create more transportation capacity. Our NC Department of Transportation has cited a \$65 billion gap in funding over the next 20 years. The gas tax must be preserved, but even as our primary source of revenue, it cannot keep pace with the increasing number of vehicles on our roads, or with the increasing number of miles each vehicle travels or the increased cost of materials such as steel and concrete.

In 2006, highway construction costs increased 74 percent when compared to 2002. With no increases in transportation revenue, escalating costs make it very difficult to maintain, much less expand, our highway system.

NC Go! has been urging the General Assembly to address this mounting crisis but time is running short. Funding options for their consideration include: raising the highway use tax by 2 percent to a level similar to adjoining states; authorizing a \$1 billion transportation bond; ending the funding diversion from the Highway Trust Fund; and, allowing local governments to use local option financing for transportation needs.

We depend on the transportation system - highways, rail, ports and transit - to efficiently move goods and people throughout our state. Maintaining and improving the transportation network is essential to preserving and strengthening North Carolina's economy and attracting new opportunities. If we fail to invest in transportation the result is clear - worsening traffic congestion.

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