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October 3, 2013

Dear Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee,

We write to express concern over two recommendations the NCDOT will make to you Friday, October 3 related to the implementation of H817 Strategic Transportation Investment.

First, through our MPOs, the online tool, and our Metro Mayors representative on the NCDOT SPOT workgroup we expressed our desire for a greater share of the local input than the division engineers at both the regional and division levels. While the workgroup adopted a 10/20 split of local voice in favor of the locally elected officials at the regional level, NCDOT will recommend an equal split instead. Each MPO's transportation advisory committee is made up of roughly twenty to forty locally elected officials. At the regional level there are multiple MPOs and RPOs and those multiple TACs can add up to one hundred locally elected voices or more. We believe this large chorus of voices should not bear equal weight to two division engineers who ultimately do not report to the people in our region, but to the NCDOT in Raleigh. We enjoy productive relationships with our professional division engineers through their participation on our TAC and benefit from their expertise when they speak at the TAC meetings. As such, we think the dual input they have through their membership on the TAC and their having 10% voice in the regional local input is a more appropriate balance.

Second, we ask that you work to ensure that as we move to a new funding distribution model we not try to turn on a dime. We cannot anticipate the possible unintended outcomes of the new ordering of priorities and as such ask that you ensure, in the first round of prioritization, that the same financial support that existed for the non-highway modes continue to serve as an expenditure floor. We understand your desire to find a single set of criteria to measure all modes and that the workgroup will work on this goal in the near future. That is the appropriate time to determine the full impact of the legislation and ensure that our public transit systems continue to serve the important role they do today in getting people to jobs, the elderly to health care centers, and the riding public to their destinations.

We thank you again for your work to pass H817 and for ensuring an important role for local government in the process. As the largest cities in the State we are significant partners with the State and Federal government in transportation spending and project delivery. We manage and maintain large networks of urban roads, airports, transit systems, and more and look forward to strengthening our partnership as our cities continue to grow.

Please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director, Julie White, at (919) 539-7871 if we can be of service in anyway.

Best Wishes,



Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane
Chair, N.C. Metropolitan Mayors Coalition



Huntersville Mayor Jill Swain
Vice-Chair, N.C. Metropolitan Mayors Coalition

CC: NCDOT Secretary Tony Tata