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## House Finance Committee Advances Transit Legislation

### *Local Option Funding Supporters Eye Crucial House Vote*

**Raleigh, N.C.** – Today’s vote by the NC House of Representatives Finance Committee in support of House Bill 148 (S151) is an important step towards improving mobility around the state, according to statewide transportation coalition *NC Go!*

The group has partnered with more than 50 organizations from around the state in urging legislators to support transit funding solutions. This diverse list of groups believes citizens deserve the right to decide how to fund public transportation in their communities and best meet local mobility needs.

The bill will next be discussed on the House floor and marks the first time the entire House will debate broad public transportation funding. Similar legislation was introduced last year. If the House passes the bill, it will move to the Senate for consideration.

House Bill 148 (S151), the Congestion Relief/Intermodal Fund, would help areas throughout the state address traffic congestion and mobility in their communities. For those communities who deem public transportation a priority, the bill would give them the opportunity to put the matter before the public in a referendum.

“We are one step closer to granting the same options to all counties that were extended to Mecklenburg,” said Marc Finlayson, co-chair for *NC Go!* “Voters there have twice supported funding for transit expansion. And the citizens have embraced the system which continues to flourish.”

Mecklenburg County is cited as a case study for letting citizens vote on local options funding for public transportation. Since 1998, voters have twice approved a ½ cent sales tax used exclusively for transit.

“This bill doesn’t impose a tax,” he added. “This is about giving communities the right to vote on their own mobility needs. We applaud the bill sponsors and committee leaders for advancing this bill.”

Among its provisions, the legislation would:

- Grant two urban areas (the Triad and the Triangle) the authority to hold referenda on a ½ cent local options sales and use tax to be designated for transit purposes; and,
- Allow all other counties to hold referenda on a ¼ cent sales and use tax to be designated for transit purposes.

North Carolina is projected to see a 50 percent growth in population by 2030. With growth comes traffic congestion which wastes time, fuel and money. Residents lose time stuck in traffic, and goods and services cannot be moved efficiently. The result is a negative impact on our quality of life and the economy.

“Transit helps connect many citizens to jobs, medical care, family and friends,” said Finlayson. “Urban, rural, east and west – there are transit needs across our state and every community is unique. Having a full life should not depend upon owning a vehicle.”

“Transit is only one piece of a total transportation solution that includes roads,” said Finlayson. “If we want to offer real mobility and compete with other states and cities like Salt Lake City, Denver, Phoenix and Minneapolis, we need meaningful options to let voters decide on transit in their communities.”

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The list of diverse allies ranges from the North Carolina Chamber and Carolina Asphalt Pavement Association to the North Carolina Sierra Club and the North Carolina Public Transportation Association. To date supporters include:

- AARP of North Carolina
- American Council of Engineering Companies of North Carolina
- ARC of North Carolina
- Cabarrus County Transportation System
- Capital Area Friends of Transit
- Carolina Asphalt Pavement Association
- Carolinas Associated General Contractors
- Carolinas Concrete Pipe and Products Association
- Cary Chamber of Commerce
- Chapel Hill Transit
- Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce
- Charlotte Area Transit System
- Charlotte Chamber of Commerce
- Conservation Council of North Carolina
- Duplin County Public Transportation
- Durham Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce
- Greene County Transportation Department
- Greensboro Partnership
- McDowell Chamber of Commerce
- Moore County Transportation Services
- Morrisville Chamber of Commerce
- NAACP of North Carolina
- North Carolina ACORN
- North Carolina Aggregates Association
- North Carolina Alliance for Health
- North Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations
- North Carolina Association of County Commissioners
- North Carolina Chamber
- North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association
- North Carolina Concrete Pavement Association
- North Carolina Housing Coalition
- North Carolina Justice Center
- North Carolina League of Municipalities
- North Carolina Metropolitan Mayors Coalition
- North Carolina Public Transportation Association
- North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center
- North Carolina Sierra Club
- North Carolina State Ports Authority
- Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation
- Pitt Area Transit System (Pitt County)
- Professional Engineers of North Carolina
- Raleigh Chamber of Commerce
- Regional Coordinated Area Transportation System (Randolph and Montgomery Counties)
- Regional Transportation Alliance
- Rutherford County Transit
- Triangle Transit
- Unifour Rural Planning Organization
- WakeUP Wake County
- Winston-Salem Chamber
- WTS NC Chapter

### **About NC Go!**

**NC Go!** is the state's only broad-based coalition advocating for North Carolina's transportation system. Our coalition consists of more than 100 businesses, chambers of commerce, associations and transit agencies representing 25,000 businesses and member organizations, with more than 6 million employees, transit riders, citizens and drivers in North Carolina. **NC Go!** has led the call to adequately invest in highways, bridges, public transportation, rails, ports, airports and ferries.

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