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Contact: Charles Hodges (chodges@capstrat.com)
(919) 882-1969 [office], (703) 967-5232 [mobile]
Ben Laws (blaws@capstrat.com)
(919) 882-1978 [office], (919) 649-7890 [mobile]

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FILLING THE GAP: NC GO! SEEKS TO ELIMINATE A LOOMING TRANSPORTATION SHORTFALL

The statewide transportation coalition proposes a five-point plan to fund billions in unmet transportation needs

RALEIGH, NC – North Carolina’s transportation system remains stuck in reverse, with the projected shortfall between anticipated revenues and identified needs over the next 25 years now amounting to \$30 billion. NC Go! announced its plan today to “FILL THE GAP” in transportation funding, shortly before presenting the plan to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee.

NC Go! co-chair Bill Carstarphen outlined the coalition’s multi-tiered approach to tackling the projected \$30 billion shortfall, which encourages rapid investment in our transportation infrastructure, exploring regional solutions for regional needs, and addressing the long-term needs of the state.

The plan, divided into short, intermediate and long-term action items, calls on policymakers to focus on five key points:

Short Term

- Pass a \$1 billion transportation bond
- End diversion from the Highway Trust and protect existing funding sources, such as the gas tax

Intermediate

- Permit local options funding, including the ability to toll urban loops
- Align NC’s Highway Use Tax with those of surrounding states

Long Term

- Reform our state’s transportation financing system

The *NC Go!* plan aims to meet the transportation needs of the growing state while encouraging economic development through a sound transportation system.

“Efficient transportation moves people and goods, reduces congestion, and keeps commerce moving,” said Carstarphen. “Beyond fostering job and business growth, US Department of Transportation research shows that for every additional \$1 billion investment in highway and

transit infrastructure, approximately 47,000 new jobs are created - about as many people in Kinston or Burlington.”

In attendance at the press conference were Senator Clark Jenkins (D- Edgecombe), and Representative Nelson Cole (D- Rockingham), co-chairs of the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee.

“There is no doubt we have some big issues to tackle concerning transportation in North Carolina,” said Cole. “We are facing a \$30 billion shortfall in funding over the next 25 years. This not something we can put off until another day. We must begin to address this funding gap today.”

“It is important to remember that transportation infrastructure is critical to our state’s economic activity and our quality of life, said Jenkins. “It also is the major driver of rural prosperity for our state. If we want to encourage businesses to locate in these areas, our transportation system must be an incentive, not a barrier.”

“Our plan is aggressive, but today we challenge our state leaders to deal with our transportation needs,” said Carstarphen. “Delay and inaction won’t put us on the path to success.”

About *NC Go!*

NC Go! was launched in 2001 with fewer than 10 members. Today, the coalition has more than 130 members representing more than 22,000 businesses and organizations and one million individuals across the state. It is the only diverse statewide organization fighting to relieve traffic congestion and to increase transportation funding.

Since its inception, the organization has worked to protect dedicated Trust Fund money, expand Highway Trust Fund flexibility, maintain efficient cash management practices, terminate annual transfers from the Highway Trust Fund to the General Fund, increase multi-modal transportation funding and has commissioned polls to gauge North Carolinians’ opinions on transportation problems and solutions.

In years past, *NC Go!* has been instrumental in the passage of several pieces of legislation including NC Moving Ahead and the Trust Fund Cash Management bill. In 2003, *NC Go!* called for an independent study of transportation project delivery, resulting in the NCDOT Project Delivery Study Final Report which identified ways to more rapidly start and finish transportation projects. In 2006, *NC Go!* continues its push to ensure the security and of North Carolina’s transportation future by protecting transportation revenue.

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