

No Tolls Coalition Commends McCrory and Dalton for Commitment to Keeping I-95 Toll Free

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Roanoke Rapids, N.C. – The No Tolls I-95 Coalition, Inc., a grassroots alliance of residents, businesses and local governments working to keep Interstate 95 in North Carolina toll-free today commended former Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory and Lieutenant Governor Walter Dalton for expressing their commitment to keeping Interstate 95 toll free during Tuesday night's second gubernatorial debate.

“On behalf of the No Tolls I-95 Coalition, I applaud Mayor McCrory and Lt. Gov. Dalton for their debate stance and commitment to keeping I-95 free of the double taxation of tolls,” said Ernie Brame, coalition Chairman and Chairman of Kenly95 Petro. “From a business perspective, we look forward to competing on a level playing field with the rest of North Carolina now and into the future.”

During the one-hour debate, the Republican and Democratic candidates for North Carolina's governorship agreed the state of North Carolina must prioritize how it spends infrastructure revenues rather than pursuing new tolls on existing highways to make up for transportation funding shortfalls.

Mayor McCrory criticized Gov. Beverly Perdue's plan to toll I-95, calling it “very poor” and a “mistake.” Lt. Gov. Dalton added that tolls should be a funding mechanism of last resort and emphasized the need for alternatives to toll roads.

“I commend the candidates for rejecting tolls along this critically important transportation artery,” said Crystal Collins, President of the North Carolina Trucking Association. “All businesses located along the corridor would be put at a competitive disadvantage to those businesses located elsewhere. Furthermore, tolls cause significant truck traffic diversion to non-highways that are ill-equipped to handle such traffic volumes jeopardizing safety.”

The coalition to keep I-95 in North Carolina toll-free has launched a website, online petition and Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/No-tolls-on-I95-in-NC/369662383053652?ref=ts>) where citizens and businesses can voice their opposition to the plan. The online petition can be signed at <http://notollsi95.com/>

Since the coalition launched in early 2012, more than 4,500 North Carolinians have signed a petition and 35 groups, including counties and towns, chambers of commerce and school boards, have passed resolutions opposing the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) plan to add tolls on I-95.

Earlier this year, the NCDOT unveiled a state-commissioned study that recommends tolling a 182-mile stretch of I-95 as a means of generating \$4.4 billion for infrastructure projects. The \$6.4 million I-95 Corridor Planning and Finance Study called for nine tolling zones about 20 miles apart.

Travel on the Phase 1 stretch, which includes widening 61 miles from mile marker 20 in Robeson County to mile marker 81 at the Interstate 40/95 interchange in Johnston County, would cost automobiles 19.2 cents a mile. The remainder would be tolled at almost 6.4 cents a mile, and driving the entire stretch

would cost an automobile about \$19.20. NCDOT is currently conducting an economic assessment of the plan that must be completed for the General Assembly.