



# NEWS RELEASE

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**RELEASE:** IMMEDIATE  
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## **INTERSTATE 73 DEVELOPMENT MOVES AHEAD ANOTHER STEP** *Decision completes the I-73 environmental impact study process*

The Federal Highway Administration has issued the Record of Decision for Interstate 73, giving the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) the authority to begin design work on the proposed \$4 billion, 70-mile long interstate between Roanoke and the North Carolina line. A Record of Decision is the final step in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process that includes public involvement and considers the possible environmental impacts of transportation projects.

“We have cleared a major milestone in the development of I-73,” said VDOT Salem District Administrator Richard Caywood, P.E. “This will be a very involved, very expensive project,” Caywood said.

Estimates indicate designing the entire new roadway could cost approximately \$330 million while construction costs could top \$4 billion. Currently, about \$13.3 million, including about \$8.8 million in federal earmarks, has been allocated in VDOT’s Six-Year Improvement Program for design and construction of I-73.

“We’re going to take steps to make the best use of the funds we currently have available,” Caywood said.

In the coming months, VDOT will work with local, state and national elected officials to identify segments for initial designs. I-73 in Virginia will reflect a “context sensitive solution” design wherever possible. As defined by the Federal Highway Administration, context sensitive solutions involve affected citizens, officials, business and property owners and others in developing “a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility.”

For more information about I-73, including location maps and the complete Final Environmental Impact Statement, which was completed in December 2006, the public can go online to <http://www.i73info.com>.

(MORE)

I-73 was identified by the U.S. Congress as a high priority corridor in the federal transportation funding bill of 1991, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Act (ISTEA). It was defined as a north-south corridor from north of Detroit to Charleston, S.C.

A portion of I-73/I-74 has been completed south of Greensboro, N.C. Construction also is underway on a section north of Rockingham, N.C., as well as a portion of the Greensboro Western Loop, which will carry both I-73 and I-40. Both segments under construction in North Carolina are expected to open in late 2007.

South Carolina is working on Draft Environmental Impact Statements to develop a proposed corridor for I-73. In West Virginia, plans and studies have been initiated, but no work has begun. The Ohio DOT currently is not developing the corridor; preliminary studies in Michigan identified potential corridors for I-73, but there are no current plans to proceed with the project.

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