



North Carolina General Assembly

February 27, 2026

Governor Stein,

As the two State Senators whose districts encompass the proposed I-77 South Express Lanes corridor, we request that you direct the North Carolina Department of Transportation to pause the I-77 South Express Lanes procurement process before the State advances to the Request for Proposals stage.

For many families in Charlotte, decisions about I-77 are not abstract policy debates — they are lived history. Senator Salvador writes from personal experience:

This is not the first time a decision of this magnitude has reshaped the landscape of our community. When I-77 was built through Charlotte, my family's church was forced to relocate to make room for the interstate, and an ancestral burial ground remains alongside that corridor, no longer directly connected to the community it once served. That history is part of a broader, documented pattern of displacement that reshaped Charlotte's historically Black neighborhoods and institutions during construction of the interstate system through the city.

We raise this history not to relitigate the past, but because it establishes the standard of care the State and its transportation agencies owe to the neighborhoods and institutions rooted along this corridor as expansion is considered. When infrastructure has previously divided communities, weakened generational wealth, and disrupted longstanding institutions, that standard demands deliberate transparency and meaningful engagement before proceeding further.

The sequence of events surrounding this project makes that standard especially important. CRTPO voted in 2024 to pursue a public-private partnership with the understanding that direction could be revisited prior to formal procurement. Yet the Department advertised the Request for Qualifications before detailed maps and project scope were presented to the public. By the time residents had full visibility into the proposal, procurement was already underway, effectively compressing the window for meaningful local input.

Advancing to the Request for Proposals stage will further restrict the State's flexibility and local authority at a moment when the public record on community impact, displacement risk, and viable alternatives remains incomplete. Once contractual processes advance, the ability to meaningfully reconsider scope or structure becomes increasingly constrained.



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Decisions that reshape neighborhoods and corridors for generations require more than procedural compliance. They require deliberate review, full transparency, genuine alternatives analysis, and authentic engagement with the residents, families, and institutions most directly affected. That confidence cannot be built while procurement continues to accelerate.

We support infrastructure solutions that meaningfully address congestion and strengthen our region's economic future. Growth demands action. But solutions must not come at the expense of established neighborhoods or at the cost of public trust.

For these reasons, we request that you direct NCDOT to pause procurement and undertake a transparent review, including a genuine alternatives analysis, before proceeding further.

Sincerely,

DeAndrea Salvador
North Carolina State Senator, District 39

Caleb Theodros
North Carolina State Senator, District 41