



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JAMES B. HUNT JR.  
GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 25201, RALEIGH, N.C. 27611-5201

DAVID MCCOY  
SECRETARY

Release: Immediate

Contact: Ashley Memory, (919) 733-2522

Release No.: 273

Date: July 12, 2001

Distribution: Statewide

**NCDOT TO DELAY RELEASE OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT  
STATEMENT FOR U.S. 321 IMPROVEMENTS IN BLOWING ROCK  
UNTIL 2002**

*Delay Will Enable Planners to Fully Evaluate All Proposed Alternatives  
& Will Give Citizens More Time To Review Document Prior to the Public Hearing*

**RALEIGH**-Transportation Secretary Lyndo Tippet today announced that the N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) will delay the release of the draft environmental impact statement for the U.S. 321 improvements in Blowing Rock until early 2002-with a public hearing in the summer of 2002.

NCDOT had originally planned to release the statement later this summer. The delay is necessary to allow planners more time to fully evaluate all five construction alternatives as well as the no-build alternative and to give citizens more time to review the document prior to the public hearing.

"Improving U.S. 321 is not only important for western North Carolina, it is also vital for citizens across the state who travel through Blowing Rock," said Tippet.

"That's why it's crucial that the department be as thorough as possible during the preparation of the draft environmental impact statement."

The longer time frame will give citizens more time to review the draft environmental impact statement before the public hearing, which will be held in summer 2002 and will allow seasonal residents the opportunity to participate. The postponement is not expected to cause a delay in the construction schedule.

"We are sensitive to the needs and concerns of all Blowing Rock residents as well as those motorists traveling through western North Carolina who use this corridor," said Sam Erby, who represents Watauga County on the N.C. Board of Transportation. "Although we plan to release the draft environmental impact statement in early 2002, we will wait until early summer to hold the public hearing, thus giving residents ample time to review this document in advance."

U.S. 321 is one of the intrastate routes identified for improvement by the Highway Trust Fund in 1989. The majority of this corridor is already improved to four lanes and the improvements in Blowing Rock will enable the state to complete this corridor. NCDOT began studies on U.S. 321 in Blowing Rock in 1989. For more information about U.S. 321 in Blowing Rock, citizens are encouraged to visit the project website at [www.ncdot.org/projects/blowingrock321](http://www.ncdot.org/projects/blowingrock321) or call the information hotline at 1-800-263-2434. \*\*\*NCDOT\*\*\*

MAILING ADDRESS:  
NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE  
CUSTOMER SERVICE  
1503 MAIL SERVICE CENTER  
RALEIGH NC 27699-1503

TELEPHONE: 1-877-368-4968  
FAX: 919-733-9980

WEBSITE: [WWW.DOT.STATE.NC.US](http://WWW.DOT.STATE.NC.US)

LOCATION:  
TRANSPORTATION BUILDING  
1 SOUTH WILMINGTON STREET  
RALEIGH NC