



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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TURNPIKE AUTHORITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**JUDGE DENIES PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION TO STOP MONROE
CONNECTOR/BYPASS**

RALEIGH – U.S. District Court Judge James C. Dever III today denied a request for a preliminary injunction to stop the proposed Monroe Connector/Bypass – a 19.7-mile toll highway that will run from U.S. 74 at Interstate 485 in eastern Mecklenburg County to U.S. 74 near the town of Marshville in Union County.

The request was filed on Nov. 23 as part of a lawsuit by the Southern Environmental Law Center on behalf of the North Carolina Wildlife Federation, Clean Air Carolina and the Yadkin Riverkeeper. The suit will continue.

Judge Dever rejected the plaintiffs' arguments that there would be irreparable harm to the environment if the project were not stopped at this time. He noted that construction is not scheduled to begin until October 2011, and a decision on the merits of the case will be concluded well before then.

"We are grateful for the judge's quick decision and are looking forward to moving ahead with the project," said N.C. Turnpike Authority Executive Director David Joyner. The Turnpike Authority is a unit of the state Department of Transportation.

The Monroe Connector/Bypass is an \$808 million project that will provide an alternative to the heavily congested U.S. 74 through Monroe. The highway is expected to reduce the average motorist's commute by about 20 minutes. It is expected to be open to traffic in 2014.

The Turnpike Authority received a required environmental permit from the N.C. Division of Water Quality on Dec. 22 and hopes to receive a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at any time. It can then proceed to final financing and awarding of bids for the project.

Editor's note: A copy of the judge's ruling and a project map are attached to this release.