



February 21, 2025

Mr. Seth Wilcher  
Federal Highway Administration  
310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410  
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Mr. Wilcher,

On behalf of the Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), I would like to express my concern regarding the continuous delays in scheduling the public hearing for the Carolina Bays Extension into North Carolina from S.C. 9 in Horry County, South Carolina, across the North Carolina state line to U.S. 17 in Brunswick County. The interest in this project is of great importance to property owners, businesses, and visitors that could be affected by the completion of this project. This extension of Highway 31 will improve the transportation network, enhancing traffic flow and connectivity for traffic through the area.

In the February 4, 2025, NCDOT Projects Update, the TAC was informed that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) public scoping process has now been tentatively set for Spring 2025. TAC is urging FHWA to move forward by inviting the general public in the project area to participate in the Draft EIS public input process in the timeframe as established, and with no further delay. Continued delay also exposes this project to increased costs. The funding of this project is an important factor in completing this vital project.

Both locals and tourists desire a more direct and efficient traffic movement within the areas surrounding Calabash, North Carolina, and this bypass will provide an alternative roadway where drivers could experience less congestion and delays. Please take this local support for the extension and the growing frustration with delaying the public input into account when scheduling the upcoming Carolina Bays meeting.

I would welcome any information that can be provided to the citizens in the GSATS region in Brunswick County.

Regards,

*Walt Eccard*

Mayor Walt Eccard  
TAC Chair