



COUNTY OF DARE

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Dare County Applauds Record of Decision on the Bonner Bridge

The long effort to replace the Bonner Bridge took a major step forward December 20 when the Federal Highway Administration signed a Record of Decision. This allows the N.C. Department of Transportation to move ahead with construction of a new bridge over Oregon Inlet.

The Record of Decision followed a press conference by U.S. Senator Kay Hagan announcing that agreement had been reached with the Department of the Interior to endorse replacement of the Bonner Bridge.

Warren Judge, Chairman of the Dare County Board of Commissioners who participated in the press conference said, "We are extremely pleased. The residents and visitors of the Outer Banks are delighted to receive this news during the Christmas season." He added, "We can't begin to thank Senator Hagan enough for assisting our efforts to overcome issues that were raised by the Department of Interior."

An important step, according to Judge, was a meeting last month when Senator Hagan toured Dare County and viewed the Bonner Bridge by boat with local, state and federal officials. He said, "That meeting with Senator Hagan was instrumental in getting all the parties to sit together and make a commitment."

In acknowledging the Record of Decision, Judge commended the efforts of Senator Marc Basnight who he explained, "for a long time has consistently been a strong advocate for replacement of the bridge. We thank him for the special role he has served in helping us get to where we are today."

Judge also thanked several other elected officials. "We are grateful for leadership in Raleigh and Washington, D.C. that has worked tirelessly to help us replace the bridge. He recognized North Carolina Governor Bev Perdue, Rep. Tim Spear, U. S. Senator Richard Burr, and Congressman Walter Jones for their efforts on behalf of the people of Dare County."

Vice-Chairman Allen Burrus, who represents Hatteras Island said, "This Record of Decision would not have been possible without all the hard work done by the Citizens Action Committee to Replace the Bonner Bridge and the Bridge Moms. Together they mobilized an outpouring of public support from around the nation and proved what can happen when a grassroots effort gets cooperation from federal agencies in working together for the good of the people."

Moving forward quickly following the Record of Decision, the N.C. Department of Transportation has already scheduled the first permit negotiation meeting for January and has three prescreened design-build teams ready to compete. These represent timesaving measures in clearing the way for construction of the new Bonner Bridge.

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