



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

April 25, 2019  
9:00 a.m.

### **Currituck Continues Support for Mid-Currituck Bridge**

The Currituck County Board of Commissioners remains steadfast in its support for the proposed Mid-Currituck Bridge despite a recent lawsuit aimed at blocking the project's construction. Once it's built, the bridge will improve connectivity, increase public safety, and provide numerous benefits for the tourism and economic development industries.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation is scheduled to begin construction of the Mid-Currituck Bridge in 2021. Upon completion, the Mid-Currituck Bridge will:

- Shorten the hurricane evacuation timeframe for residents and visitors in Corolla. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's N.C. Evacuation Study data, it may take up to 44 hours for the final evacuees to clear the region during a heavy evacuation by traveling current routes.
- Provide a direct route for first responders to transport medical emergencies.
- Shorten the daily commute for residents to reach jobs.
- Create new economic development and employment opportunities.
- Shorten travel times for tourists visiting Corolla. This in turn will enhance the tourism industry by making Corolla a more attractive destination.
- Improve traffic flow on the county's main thoroughfare, Hwy. 158/168, to help year-round county residents with local travel.
- Help manage future transportation needs due to population growth.
- Improve connectivity between the mainland and Outer Banks, creating a heightened sense of community.

"This bridge has been in the works for more than three decades and is vital to the continued health of our economy and changing demands of our guests and residents," said Bob White, Chairman of the Currituck County Board of Commissioners.

A lawsuit filed April 23, 2019 by the Southern Environmental Law Center claims the bridge would be damaging to the local environment and wildlife of the Currituck Sound. Currituck County, however, has a rich history of hunting and fishing and the Board of Commissioners is committed to preserving that legacy.

Currituck County has long been a champion for wildlife and the environment. Known as "a Sportsman's Paradise", Currituck is the county in which Ducks Unlimited was first created. The county's sustained effort for responsible environmental stewardship has been formally recognized by numerous federal, state, and regional agencies. Currituck has received

awards from the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust, North Carolina Coastal Federation, and the Albemarle Resource Conservation and Development Council. The county has also enjoyed long-standing partnerships with US Fish & Wildlife, NC Forest Service, Audubon Society, and other agencies as advocates for the environment.

Currently, the only crossing of the Currituck Sound is the Wright-Memorial Bridge on U.S. 158, which is located at the southern end of Currituck County and crosses into Dare County. The proposed bridge will provide a second crossing of the Sound, from Corolla to Aydlett, and create a direct connection between two geographically-separated areas of Currituck County. Citizens in Corolla will be able to attend county meetings in a timelier manner, without having to travel through Dare County to reach Currituck's mainland. This creates an additional benefit of improving citizen participation in governmental proceedings.

The Board of Commissioners also favors construction of the bridge over other proposed alternatives, such as widening Hwy. 158 and NC 12. The county feels that this approach would require the state to accomplish a lengthy and very expensive program to obtain the necessary properties required to allow for the widening of both roads.

Overall, the Mid-Currituck Bridge project will include a two-lane bridge over the Currituck Sound, approximately 4.7 miles in length, and a second two-lane bridge over Maple Swamp on the mainland, approximately 1.5 miles long, that connects to Hwy. 158 in Aydlett. A toll plaza will be constructed near the connection to Hwy. 158. More project information can be found at the NCDOT website, <https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/mid-currituck-bridge/Pages/default.aspx>.

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