



# North Carolina State Highway Patrol

Josh Stein  
Governor

Freddy L. Johnson, Jr.  
Commander

February 22, 2026

The Honorable Sean Duffy  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), I am pleased to express our strong support for **Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST or “the Project”)**, submitted to USDOT’s 2026 BUILD program. The Project will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new freight truck parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert drivers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead. Additionally, REST will construct a new Welcome Center Facility to better meet the needs of both truckers and traveling families with upgraded amenities and improvements to the user experience that improve safety and convenience at the 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited Welcome Center in NC.

I-77 is a key commercial and tourism corridor that connects the southeast to major midwestern markets. Approximately 39,000 vehicles cross into NC from Virginia on I-77 daily; 33% of that traffic volume (13,420) are freight trucks transporting goods which are the backbone of NC’s economic vitality.

However, the corridor faces severe truck parking shortages, and freight truck drivers are often forced to park illegally on interstate ramps and shoulders to stay within federal Hours Of Service (HOS) regulations. This damages pavement, blocks emergency response, and creates hazards in an area already challenged by steep grades and harsh winter weather; particularly along on- and off-ramps that are high-conflict zones with limited sight distance.

Additionally, the corridor’s lack of freight truck parking reduces productivity and incurs additional costs for motor carriers; research from the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) shows that truckers regularly terminate trips or end their HOS regimen early to find scarce parking, forfeiting 56 minutes of drive time per day and costing approximately \$4,600 in lost compensation. Freight truck drivers who are unable to find safe parking are at greater risk of fatigue-related impairment, increasing safety risks for the traveling public. Indeed, according to the FMCSA, North Carolina was in the top 10 states for fatal truck-involved crashes between 2018-2022, and research shows that 10- 20 percent of all US truck crashes involve fatigued drivers. By expanding truck parking, REST will reduce crash risks and support the needs of truckers who are key to the state’s economic competitiveness.

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**The North Carolina Highway Patrol strongly endorses** the initiative to expand safe truck parking areas at the I-77 Welcome Center. As a critical node in our transportation infrastructure, this project will address acute truck parking shortages that endanger both truckers and the driving public. The addition of 30 new parking spaces, along with enhanced monitoring systems, will ensure that truck drivers have safe, legal places to rest, significantly reducing the risk of fatigue-related accidents. This project is crucial for maintaining the safety and efficiency of our roadways, particularly given the high volume of commercial traffic that traverses I-77 daily. The enhancements will not only improve safety but also support the economic vitality of North Carolina by facilitating the smooth transport of goods across our state.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Col. F.L. Johnson, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Colonel Freddy L. Johnson, Jr.  
Commander, North Carolina State Highway Patrol