



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

October 6, 2008

Mr. John F. Sullivan, III, PE
Federal Highway Administration
310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

Dear Mr. *John* Sullivan:

REC'D		OCT 7 2008	
DIV ADMIN		71	
ASST DIV ADMIN			
SECRETARY			
FIN MGR		FIN SPEC	
COMP SPEC		FIN ASST	
BRIDGE		ASST BRIDGE	
RLTY CFC		CIV RIGHTS SPEC	
T D ENG		LYNDO TIPPETT	
TO & S - A		SECRETARY TO S - A	
P & PD ENG			
PROG ASST		ENV SPEC	
PL - A		PL - B	
PL - C		AIR QLTY SPEC	
OPS ENG			
ADMIN ASST		AAE / TR	
A - 1		A - 2	
A - 3		A - 4	
ENG. COORD		P & M ENG	
FILE		TRASH	

As you know, we have been reviewing the current Merger 01 Process as it relates to SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, which requires the development of an environmental coordination plan for projects requiring Environmental Impact Statements. We have coordinated with your staff, the Merger Management Team, and the Interagency Leadership Team to revise the Merger 01 Guidance language so that it reflects the requirements of Section 6002. The proposed changes have also been previously presented to our Board of Transportation for their information. A copy of the revised Merger Process guidance is attached. A summary of the proposed changes are as follows:

- For federally funded projects, the lead federal agency, the FHWA, is identified and NCDOT has been identified as a joint lead agency.
- Additional emphasis is placed on agency participation in project scoping.
- It has been acknowledged that the Merger 01 Agreement serves as a standing Invitation to Participate to those agencies that are listed as Project Team Members in the Merger process information. Also, an individual Invitation to Participate will be issued to any other agency identified as having an interest in the particular project.
- An opportunity for public input is established prior to Concurrence Point 1. This occurs by allowing the option to move the citizens' information meeting prior to Concurrence Point 1 or preparing a project newsletter, mailing, or media announcement before Concurrence Point 1.

MAILING ADDRESS:

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1 SOUTH WILMINGTON STREET
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Mr. John F. Sullivan, III, PE
Page 2
October 6, 2008

Based on the described and attached changes, I am requesting that the Federal Highway Administration agree to let the Merger 01 Process serve as the Department's programmatic environmental coordination plan in compliance with Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU. Also, we would like to retain the option to develop an individual coordination plan on specific projects in lieu of using the Merger process where deemed appropriate. When this occurs, we will notify your office and coordinate with you to develop the project specific environmental coordination plan.

Thank you and your staff for your assistance in the continued improvement of our project development process and our interagency collaboration. Please call me if you have any questions, or if we need to further discuss.

Sincerely,



Deborah M. Barbour, PE
Director of Preconstruction

12/9/2008

Approved:



John F. Sullivan, III, PE

Date

Attachment

DMB/md

cc: Secretary Lyndo Tippet
Bill Rosser, PE
Greg Thorpe, Ph.D.
Art McMillan, PE