



PRESS RELEASE

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Senators Cook and Sanderson Sponsor Legislation to Block Tolls on N.C. Ferry Routes

Raleigh, N.C. – Senator Bill Cook (R-District 1) and Senator Norman W. Sanderson (R-District 2) filed Senate Bill 812 (Ferry Tolling/Replacement Funds) Wednesday, May 4, 2016 legislation that would remove tolls on the three North Carolina ferry routes that have them now, and prohibits the Division from placing them on any of the other four routes in the future.

The bill would appropriate the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Ferry Division with an additional \$23,095,000 of recurring funds to be allocated for ferry vessel replacement – an estimate from the Division.

“Even if all the ferry routes were tolled, at current levels, the resulting revenue would not go far in offsetting the significant cost of running and making capital improvements to the ferry system,” Cook said. **“I will continue to advocate for responsible alternatives to ferry tolling on behalf of the constituents in Senate district 1.”**

The NCDOT Ferry Division is the second largest state operated ferry system in the United States consisting of seven scheduled routes, one emergency route, twenty one ferry vessels, twelve terminals, state owned shipyard, and four field maintenance shops.

The roughly \$23 million appropriation would be in addition to the approximately \$40 million allocated each year for labor, fuel, materials and services. Additionally, during the 2015 legislative session, through the budget, the

General Assembly created a capital improvement account for the Ferry Division in the Highway Fund. It allows the Division to benefit from services they perform, such as painting or sandblasting of boats, in their Mann's Harbor facility, a reflection of what Cook and Sanderson included in Senate Bill 113.

“My argument against ferry tolls remains the same as it always has been,” Sanderson said. “They are the highways for many of my constituents living on the coast. They are an attractive draw for the many visitors traveling to our area and have helped keep tourism a top revenue producer for our coastal counties and state. We will continue to do everything we can to build support for this commonsense solution.”

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