

Board of Commissioners

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COUNTY OF HYDE

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A RESOLUTION REQUESTING IMMEDIATE ACTION BE TAKEN AT FEDERAL AND STATE LEVELS TO PROVIDE RELIABLE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM OCRACOKE ISLAND THROUGH INVESTMENT IN RESILIENT TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

WHEREAS, Ocracoke Island, an unincorporated township in the County of Hyde, has provided critical navigational channels since the discovery and colonization of the United States of America;

WHEREAS, the cultural and maritime history of Ocracoke Island and its surrounding waterways is embedded in the fabric of the state of North Carolina and the United States of America;

WHEREAS, Ocracoke Island is the pearl of the Outer Banks of North Carolina housing one of the oldest and most culturally significant populations of the nation;

WHEREAS, reliable transportation must be provided to not only the 900 year-round residents of Ocracoke, but the tourist population – which swells to 10,000 in summer months;

WHEREAS, Ocracoke Island’s travel and tourism economic impact is important to the state of North Carolina with total visitor spending in Hyde County in 2022 valued at \$58,310,000 with a spending growth rate of 9.6% from 2021 to 2022 according to a study prepared for Visit North Carolina by Tourism Economics, “The Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties”;

WHEREAS, the Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties further showed Hyde County ranking fourth regionally in total visitor spending, accounting for \$58.31 million in spending, growing by 9.6 percent, 376 jobs, \$13.6 million labor income, \$1.9 million state taxes, \$2.5 million local taxes, and tax savings per resident of \$985.23;

WHEREAS, Ocracoke Island is truly an island and only accessible by the North Carolina Department of Transportation Ferry Division, private boats, and private aircraft;

WHEREAS, Ocracoke Island has three established ferry routes with two routes across Pamlico Sound entering into Silver Lake Harbor and one route from Hatteras Island to the north end of Ocracoke Island connecting to North Carolina Highway 12;

WHEREAS, each North Carolina Ferry Route, the federally authorized channels that support them, and the North Carolina Highways that further provide transportation to the village of

Ocracoke must be maintained and supported with investment in order for these routes to be operationally sustainable and to provide reliable and resilient transportation to the island;

WHEREAS, the Village of Ocracoke was without access to Hatteras Island via the Hatteras Island Ferry due to ocean overwash on NC Highway 12 for 7 consecutive days beginning March 22, 2024, creating life safety issues, hindering emergency medical services, preventing the commerce of goods and services, delaying the United States Mail and other parcel delivery services, preventing the delivery of medicines and other critical needs of the Ocracoke Community and preventing visitors from travel to one of the top destination spots in the state of North Carolina on a holiday weekend thereby reducing visitor spending for the village, the county and the state;

WHEREAS, the breach of access for 7 consecutive days was the longest but one of many closures over the last several months which has eroded public confidence in visiting Ocracoke Island, investing in Ocracoke Island and the future resiliency of Ocracoke Island;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Hyde County Board of Commissioners respectfully requests that immediate action be taken on both federal and state levels to provide reliable and sustainable transportation to and from Ocracoke Island through the investment and construction of resilient transportation infrastructure and the coordination of federal and state agencies to aid in planning and permitting of supporting projects;

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, that the Hyde County Board of Commissioners respectfully requests that federal funding be provided at an adequate level to complete much-needed dredging projects and continued maintenance dredging to sustain such projects within all federally authorized channels and ferry channels that support transportation to and from Ocracoke Island with which funding to include the costs of placement of the dredged material, when compatible and appropriate, on our beaches along areas where ocean overwash halts roadway transportation through beach nourishment;

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, that the Hyde County Board of Commissioners respectfully requests that the North Carolina Department of Transportation complete the current sandbag replacement project on the north end of Ocracoke Island along Highway 12 in what is commonly known as the "hot spot" area and immediately follow with a beach nourishment project to protect the roadway from ocean overwash;

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, that the Hyde County Board of Commissioners respectfully requests that the North Carolina Department of Transportation follow the sandbag and beach nourishment project at the "hot spot" area of Highway 12 on the north end of Ocracoke Island with a road relocation and elevation project, planning of which should begin immediately with collaboration from local stakeholders;

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, that the Hyde County Board of Commissioners respectfully requests that the North Carolina Department of Transportation invest in all Ocracoke motor vessels to ensure adequate coverage and all Ocracoke ferry ramps to ensure they are compatible with all ferries within the fleet to allow a more flexible and resilient ferry fleet that can provide transportation to all ferry terminals located on the island and at destination facilities.

This 4th day of March 2024.



Earl Pugh Jr.
Chairman



Richard Mann
Clerk to the Board

