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March 16, 2016

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JAMES H. LUCAS
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Governor of South Carolina
South Carolina State House
First Floor
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Governor Haley:

Thank you for taking time in your office last Thursday and again yesterday during the House Republican Caucus meeting to discuss the Senate amendment to the roads bill (H. 3579). Extensive common ground exists between our policy positions and it is gratifying to know how much House Republicans are in agreement with you on the need to address this issue.

First and foremost, a majority of the House Republican Caucus believes that we cannot let the opportunity for real reform at the Department of Transportation (DOT) pass us by. This issue is far too essential to postpone. We have advocated for these reforms at DOT for a number of years. Our members have worked diligently to reach the point where we are days away from restoring the executive function of road repair and maintenance to the appropriate branch of government. We have made a commitment to the people of South Carolina that we will address governance at DOT this year and we will follow through with that promise.

After you concluded your remarks at the meeting yesterday, a wide-ranging discussion commenced regarding the best path forward. Not a single member in the room disagreed with the basic assertion that DOT must be reformed. Every single word uttered supported our shared vision of seizing this important opportunity to permanently fix this agency and create real accountability for the people of South Carolina at DOT.

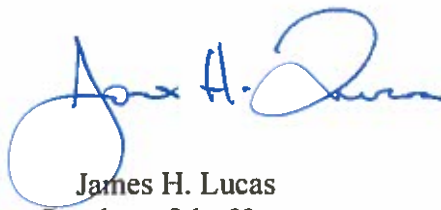
Secondly, thank you for expressing a concern a vast majority of our caucus shares by recognizing that the Senate bill does not contain a sustainable funding solution. We also appreciate your pledge to work with us to quickly create a long-term sustainable funding model. We owe it to the people of South Carolina to give the newly reformed DOT sound financial footing so that our infrastructure can adequately be maintained and repaired.

The House received the Senate amendment to H. 3579 on Tuesday, March 15th after nearly a year's time in the Senate. The first opportunity for uncontested debate is tomorrow, Thursday, March 17th. The House is expected to begin budget deliberations next Monday, March 21st. Immediately following budget debate, the House will act very quickly to advance this legislation.

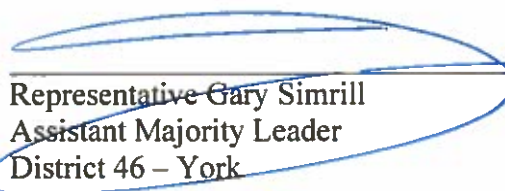
As a point of clarification, legislative options for H.3579 can not be simplified into a question of concurrence or non-concurrence. The House has three choices: 1) non-concur in the senate amendment; 2) concur in the senate amendment; and 3) offer an additional amendment to the bill that addresses the governance of DOT. At this point, we do not consider the first option to be a viable alternative for the House Republican Caucus. However, the other options remain on the table.

The entire membership of the South Carolina House Republican Caucus stands ready to closely work with the Governor's office over the next few weeks. Given the work that we have already put forth to address DOT reform, our membership must do our due diligence so that we can make the best possible decision. At this time, we appreciate you respecting our legislative responsibilities by reserving judgment until after the House has been given a necessary amount of time to review the Senate amendment. If we work together, we are confident that we will all be able to share in the celebration of this meaningful accomplishment very soon.


Sincerely,



James H. Lucas
Speaker of the House



Representative Gary Simrill
Assistant Majority Leader
District 46 – York



Representative Bruce Bannister
Majority Leader
District 24 - Greenville