STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR

DANIEL JOHNSON
SECRETARY

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Coastal Resources Commission

From: Paul Williams, NCDOT Division 1 and Lindsay Crocker, Project Management Unit

Date: October 7, 2026

RE: Presentation on NCDOT Grant Solving Access in Dare County (SAND)

Members of the NCDOT project team and Division 1 will provide an update on a Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) grant, titled Solving Access for N.C. 12 in Dare County (SAND). An 11-mile stretch in Dare County, between the Marc Basnight Bridge and the Rodanthe "Jug Handle" Bridge, has experienced repeated storm damage and periodic closures. The NCDOT seeks to streamline future environment reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act to develop viable alternatives for this area.

Building on previous efforts such as the N.C. 12 Task Force and past National Environmental Policy Act reviews, the SAND Plan will evaluate practical solutions based on environmental and community considerations, cost, and feasibility. The goal is to identify improvements that will reduce travel disruptions and provide both long and short-term transportation solutions.

N.C. 12 is a key route connecting communities along the Outer Banks barrier islands. These islands are frequently impacted by storms, flooding, erosion, and overwash, which can damage the roadway and disrupt travel. Late September, a powerful Nor'easter damaged, buckled, or undermined approximately 1,000' of N.C. 12 on Pea Island. The damage cut off road access to Hatteras Island, forcing emergency ferry operations until temporary gravel and one-way traffic lanes could be scraped together and reopened.

NCDOT will provide an overview of the response efforts, the continued maintenance challenges and the progress to the SAND project to date.

The $1.86M grant is funded by USDOT's Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) grant program.