



**Representative Alice Bordsen**  
**North Carolina General Assembly**  
**District 63**  
**300 N. Salisbury Street, Room 602**  
**Phone: 919-733-5820**  
**Fax: 919-754-3297**



**Volume VII, Issue I6**

***Your Voice in Raleigh***

**November 29, 2011**

**NC HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES VOTES 96-23 to CAP the GAS TAX**

**DID YOU KNOW...**

...that over 5,000 of the state’s 13,000 bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete?

...that a gas tax cap would cut money needed to replace 428 bridges (36 in District 7, which consists of 5 counties including Alamance) and to repair/resurface 2,780 miles of highways across the state (237 miles in District 7)?

...that North Carolina was once called “the good roads state” and that current road conditions have caused our roads to be downgraded from a D to a D-?

...that from 1984 to 2003, the percentage of North Carolina rural interstate pavement in poor condition almost tripled, and the percentage of urban interstate pavement in poor condition more than doubled?

...that North Carolina ranks 48<sup>th</sup> in the country in spending per lane-mile of paved road?

...that after adjusting for inflation, North Carolina’s gas tax is low by historical standards (and only in the 1980’s was the tax lower)?

...that a portion of the gas tax rate rises and falls with the price of gas to account for the role of petroleum products in the price of road construction and maintenance?

...that, when adjusted for inflation in highway construction prices, the gas tax, in constant dollars, was 30% lower than in 1992?

...that unemployment in the construction industry remains above 13%?

...that every penny of state gas tax equals \$50 million per year?

I was one of the 23 who voted against capping the gas tax (House Bill 645) at this time. I did so based on the information presented above as well as additional thoughts I would like to share with you.

No matter what is said, the loss of this revenue – which will not provide any relief at the pump – will result in approximately 2,000 jobs lost as highway and

bridge repairs are put on hold. Alamance County alone could have a \$4.5 million delay in repairs and construction. We have serious road needs in the county – we cannot afford this delay. Capping this tax creates a false economy and does real harm to our already inadequate infrastructure repairs. The longer maintenance is delayed, the worse the underlying problems will become. This will also result in higher repair costs for vehicles and the owners who use these roads.

Years ago this state, in an economically troubled time, took on the state-wide burden of road construction and repair. It was done so that small business people and farmers could get their goods to market. It was a daunting task to take on, but North Carolina did it and it paid off.

Now we see our bridges and roads crumbling ; our will to maintain the state’s infrastructure has been abandoned. All of our

businesses and our farmers trying to build local markets still need our roads to be maintained and improved. Why would we eliminate nearly \$825 million in revenue at this juncture when by so doing it will not benefit consumer wallets?

Voting yes on this bill would have been politically safe, but sometimes one must take a serious stance on serious issues. I voted no on HB 645 because it was the only honest and right way to vote.

[Information for this newsletter was derived from the NC Department of Transportation, the NC League of Municipalities, The Progressive Pulse of NC Policy Watch, the Raleigh News and Observer and “A Revolution in Responsibilities of North Carolina Governments,” found in Popular Government , Winter 2009, by Michael Walden, William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor in the Dept. of Agricultural and Resource Economics at North Carolina State University.]