



## North Carolina Leaders Secure \$7 Million to Sustain Ferry Service

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**October 22, 2025 - Ocracoke, NC** – The Ocracoke Access Alliance today praised the North Carolina General Assembly and key legislative leaders for approving \$7 million in critical funding to support the state’s ferry system — ensuring continued operations, vital maintenance, and reliable access for coastal communities. Proposed service reductions no longer need to be implemented, to the benefit of all ferry-reliant coastal communities.

The newly approved funding includes **\$3 million for ferry operations** to maintain service levels statewide and **\$4 million for essential shipyard maintenance**, including work on the *Sea Level*, a vessel vital to the mainland–Ocracoke routes.

The Ocracoke Access Alliance expressed appreciation to **House Speaker Destin Hall, Senate President Phil Berger, Representatives Keith Kidwell, Edward Goodwin & John Torbett, and Senators Bobby Hanig & Norman Sanderson** for their leadership and support. The Alliance also appreciates the coordination with and hard work on this issue by Hyde County, especially **County Manager Kris Cahoon Noble and County Commissioner Randal Mathews**.

“This is a major win for Ocracoke and every ferry-served community in North Carolina,” said **Justin LeBlanc**, Executive Director of the Ocracoke Access Alliance. “We deeply appreciate the General Assembly’s commitment to the Ferry Division and to the coastal residents and visitors who depend on this essential service. This funding ensures the *Sea Level* will return to service next spring and that vital ferry routes will continue to operate at full strength.”

The Ocracoke Access Alliance noted that the state’s ferry network is not only a lifeline for residents but also a cornerstone of the coastal economy, supporting tourism, small businesses, and year-round access to jobs and services.

“The leadership shown by Speaker Hall, Senator Berger, and our coastal delegation demonstrates a shared commitment to keeping North Carolina connected,” LeBlanc added. “It’s an investment in people, in infrastructure, and in the continued vitality of our island communities.”

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### About the Ocracoke Access Alliance

The Ocracoke Access Alliance is a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization working to secure sustainable funding and policy support for Ocracoke Island’s transportation, infrastructure, and coastal resilience needs. The Alliance advocates for ferry operations, NC-12 maintenance, beach nourishment, and other projects that protect access and strengthen coastal economies. The Alliance is actively fundraising from Ocracoke businesses, vendors, residents, non-resident property owners, and others interested in safe, efficient, and reliable access to Ocracoke Island.