



Resolution 2026-10

A resolution opposing the imposition of tolls on Ferry Service Operations

WHEREAS, the Town of Oriental is surrounded by water and is a rural community with limited access to communities on the opposite side of the Neuse River; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Oriental, located in Pamlico County, is a tourist destination and is financially reliant on visitors who travel to us via the Minnesott Beach-Cherry Branch ferry; and

WHEREAS, loss of revenue from visitors bypassing Oriental would threaten the ability of residents and businesses to earn a living; and

WHEREAS, loss of revenue to Oriental is also a loss of revenue to the State of North Carolina and would negatively impact the economy, culture, seafood industry, and the overall well-being of the State; and

WHEREAS, a significant portion of our residents use the ferry to commute to and from work at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, the largest Marine Air Base and home to the Second Marine Aircraft Wing; and

WHEREAS, imposition of ferry tolls would create a significant hardship on residents of Oriental and the rest of Pamlico County, whose residents, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, rank 100th out of 100 North Carolina counties in weekly wage earnings; and

WHEREAS, Section 43.15(a) of Session Law 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257), which amended G.S. § 136-82, requires the North Carolina Department of Transportation Ferry Division to establish and collect tolls on all ferry routes no later than January 1, 2027; and

WHEREAS, the legislation requires tolls on the Cherry Branch-Minnesott Beach ferry route, which has historically operated without a toll, and requires the establishment of a \$150 annual commuter pass for eligible permanent residents of North Carolina's coastal counties and active-duty military personnel; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Oriental recognizes the importance of maintaining affordable and accessible ferry service for the residents, businesses, workers, and visitors of Pamlico County and other coastal communities; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Oriental Mayor and Board strongly oppose the imposition of tolls on ferry service between Minnesott Beach and Cherry Branch and urge the North Carolina General Assembly and the North Carolina Department of Transportation to reconsider the requirement for tolls on historically toll-free ferry routes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of Oriental Mayor and Board join other coastal communities in opposing the imposition of tolls on historically toll-free ferry routes and any increases in tolls on ferry routes where tolls currently exist.

Adopted this 13th Day of October, 2026.

Sally T. Belangia, Mayor

Diane H. Miller, MPA, ICMA-CM