

The Cape Fear Memorial Bridge — Raleigh's Failure Is About to Cost Us

Brunswick County is one of the fastest-growing counties in the entire United States. Wilmington continues to grow as the Port City — a statewide economic engine that moves billions of dollars in goods every year. Yet despite this extraordinary growth, the current North Carolina General Assembly has **failed to plan for the future, failed to fund the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge replacement**, and now the people of Leland and Wilmington are being told they may have to pay tolls just to get to work, school, and medical care.

That's not planning. That's neglect.

The Cape Fear Memorial Bridge is not a local convenience — it is a **statewide economic artery**. It carries workers, freight, emergency services, and the daily life of two rapidly growing communities. But because Raleigh has not invested in the infrastructure that growth demands, the Turnpike Authority is preparing to toll the bridge.

And those tolls will fall hardest on the people who can least afford them.

Tolling the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge will:

- Burden the hard-working families of Leland and Wilmington
- Increase the cost of commuting for nurses, teachers, first responders, and service workers
- Push businesses and jobs south toward Myrtle Beach, where companies won't face daily toll costs
- Penalize the very communities that keep the Port City running

This is what happens when the legislature refuses to plan for growth. Brunswick County's explosive expansion didn't happen overnight — but the state failed to prepare for it. Now residents are being asked to pay for that failure every single day at a toll booth.

Wilmington is the Port City — and it should lead like it.

The Port of Wilmington is a statewide asset, and it must be treated like one. I will work to ensure the Port is **the most efficient, competitive, and forward-looking port on the East Coast** — and that its success **benefits the neighborhoods it impacts**, not burdens them.

A thriving port should mean:

- Stronger local infrastructure

- Safer roads and bridges
- Good jobs
- Investment in the communities that support it

Not tolls on working families.

North Carolina deserves leadership that plans for growth instead of reacting to crisis. The Cape Fear Memorial Bridge should have been funded years ago. Instead, Raleigh's inaction is about to cost the people of Leland and Wilmington — unless we demand better.