



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

JAMES H. TROGDON, III
SECRETARY

January 31, 2017

Mrs. Tammy S. Richards
Financial Specialist
FHWA DOT
310 New Bern Ave., Suite 410
Raleigh, NC 27601

STIP #: F-5700
WBS Element: 52016.1.FD1
Division: 1
County: Dare
Project: New River Class Double-Ended Passenger/Vehicle Ferry

Subject: Request for Waiver to "Buy America" 23CFR 635.410

NCDOT is requesting a waiver to the "Buy America" requirements in order to purchase two (2) VOITH Turbo 16 GII/100 propulsion units for the reference project. The federal regulations part 23CFR 635.410 allows a state to request a waiver from the requirement if there are no products available to meet the specification of this product. The NCDOT Ferry Division has purchased seven (7) ferries with similar units, some using Federal matching funds to build the vessels.

The vessel will be used for passenger/vehicle service on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. The ferry will help provide additional capacity to move traffic along a very important and strategic route between Ocracoke Island and Hatteras. The ferry will be replacing an older Hatteras Class ferry with lesser capacity and maneuverability. This River Class design ferry will provide a safer and more cost effective means for moving traffic. The current route is approximately 12 miles in length in an area with higher than average winds and shallow water conditions.

Ref: STIP #: F-5700 WBS Element 52016.1.FD1

The new vessel will join a fleet of other River Class ferries involved with strategic transportation needs in this area of North Carolina. We are building this ferry to better put our fleet in a position to use standardized type vessels to meet the changing demands of transportation along the Outer Banks. This will be our eighth VOITH Turbo equipped ferry allowing us to train and equip our crews with the latest technology and equipment available.

The cost of the propulsion system is similar to past units purchased and will use similar spare parts for repairs and maintenance. These units provide superior maneuverability compared to standard propeller and rudder installations. A vessel equipped with these units can provide a very safe environment for passengers and vehicles. We have operated similar units for more than 20 years on the Outer Banks, Southport, Cherry Branch and Pamlico River in North Carolina.

We therefore request approval of a waiver from the “Buy America” requirement for this partially FHWA funded project.

Sincerely yours,



Joe D. Waldrep
Marine Engineer
NCDOT Ferry Division

Cc: Sterling Baker, Multimodal Special Projects Engineer
Edward Goodwin, Director
Jed Dixon, Deputy Director
Charlie Fearing, Assistant Director Maintenance