**Harbison State Forest is an unparalleled green space within the greater Columbia area.** As an amazingly precious, rare environmental treasure in our area, the Friends of Harbison State Forest and other users seek to preserve and conserve it, sharing its beauty with others. **Individuals across all spectrums use Harbison** as a place to enjoy the simple peace and quite of nature through activities such as walking, jogging, running, and biking. Columbia simply does not contain another area like Harbison State Forest, allowing individuals to enjoy 2,200 acres of woodland located along the banks of the Broad River. **Harbison State Forest is truly one in a million.**

Greenspace holds a huge value in our country these days, as development is increasing and greenspace is disappearing. The fact that Harbison State Forest is the only area like it within the Greater Columbia Metropolitan area goes to show just how vital it is to Columbia as a greenspace. Yes, we do have city parks and other green areas, but none has the same sprawling forest acreage, and therefore the same value, as Harbison State Forest. **Harbison State Forest adds both unparalleled recreational, educational, tourist, and environmental value as a greenspace to the Columbia area and we simply cannot risk compromising this.**

Additionally, we have seen an increased interest in using the forest as a draw for tourism through events, such as the Blues, Berries, & BBQ Festival this past June as well as many biking and trail running events throughout the year. The Friends of Harbison State Forest was also contacted this month by the Columbia Convention & Visitor’s Bureau as the Irmo Chamber was listing Harbison State Forest as one of the area’s best attributes in an upcoming campaign. **Any project that impacts the local environment could potentially impact the county and state's ability to draw tourism revenue from this natural resource.**

**Yet, the Northern Alignment Arterial proposal would impact 206 local properties, 36.62 wetland acres, and 11,243 linear feet of stream and the Northern Alignment Expressway proposal would impact 98 local properties, 21.7 wetland acres, and 6,110 linear feet of stream bordering the Forest.** Both of these proposals, if implemented, would severely impact the local environment in a negative way, including that which borders Harbison State Forest. **The increased noise pollution, not only due to an increase in heavy traffic but also to a decrease in tree buffer, would impact the wildlife, users of the forest, and nearby residents.** **The additional heavy traffic would also lead to an increase in air pollution surrounding Harbison State Forest.** Especially as an area that is enjoyed for physical recreational activities, this increase in exhaust fumes and air pollution could become a real problem for both dedicated and occasional users.

**Of the two, the Northern Alignment Arterial proposal would be the least desirable,** as it would have a wider corridor width and therefore create more noise due to higher speeds and a decreased tree buffer zone. **An increase in noise will negatively impact the wildlife living within the Forest and bordering land, the individuals who utilize Harbison as a natural quite space to observe these various species, and the 60,000 others who visit Harbison each year in order to run, bike, and hike in a quite, natural space away from the busy day to day presented by our city.**

**Thank you for your continued support of Harbison State Forest!**

Sincerely,