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**Press Office** - Press Releases

For Immediate Release: March 28, 2007

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**DOLE CALLS FOR FULL CASH SETTLEMENT FOR SWAIN COUNTY, WILL INTRODUCE SENATE LEGISLATION TO AUTHORIZE FUNDING**

*Cites Insurmountable Economic, Environmental Costs to Build North Shore Road*

**March 28th, 2007** - Washington, D.C. - U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Dole today announced her support for a full cash settlement for Swain County, North Carolina, in lieu of further construction of the North Shore Road. Dole and other members of the North Carolina and Tennessee congressional delegations today wrote to Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne, calling on the agency to immediately begin working with Congress to provide the cash settlement to Swain County. Dole will introduce legislation in the Senate that provides the framework for a full cash settlement.

In 1943, the government flooded a highway in creating the Fontana Dam and made a commitment to Swain County to build a new road – the North Shore Road – through what had become the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The U.S. Supreme Court held in 1946 that there is no legal obligation to satisfy that commitment by building a road. More than 60 years of controversy have ensued.

The National Park Service’s draft environmental impact statement, which was released in January 2006, estimates that it would cost nearly \$600 million to complete the North Shore Road, and some estimates have projected a cost of \$1 billion.

“After closely reviewing the National Park Service’s draft environmental impact statement, and after follow up discussions with that agency, it is abundantly clear from the Park Service’s assessment that the environmental and economic costs to build the North Shore Road are just too great,” said Dole. “It’s time to bring this 60-year controversy to a close, and it’s time to focus our efforts on providing the citizens of Swain County with compensation to make good on the government’s commitment.

“I sympathize with the folks in Swain County who want this road built, who want better access to their family land and cemeteries. While I understand that a monetary settlement is not the outcome that some have hoped for, I welcome the support of Swain County residents in my efforts to secure this funding, which will provide much needed resources for Swain County’s local schools, economic development, and other important services.”

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