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**Support of Northern Turnpike Connector Continues
Ahead of M-CORES Task Force Meeting**

Tallahassee, Fla. – Ahead of the Northern Turnpike Connector task force meeting to be held today in Ocala, Florida, supporters throughout the region and state joined together in support. The Northern Turnpike Connector extends from the northern terminus of Florida’s turnpike northwest to the Suncoast Parkway, and is one of the three corridors being studied as part of the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program.

“First and foremost, the proposed corridors will create additional much-needed evacuation routes for Floridians,” said Craig Fugate, former Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator and former Florida Emergency Management Director. “In 2017, during Hurricane Irma, nearly a quarter of our state’s population – about 5.6 million Floridians – were told to evacuate, causing widespread traffic. The new roads would provide our state with the accessible and reliable roadways we need for travel, as well as creating new routes to transport relief supplies and other vital necessities, such as food, fuel and water. Further, while providing Floridians with these roads, the M-CORES program will simultaneously take into account Florida’s environment, ensuring anything built will be done so in an environmentally friendly manner with minimal disruption.”

“Florida has more and more people calling it home every day,” Brewster Bevis, senior vice president of state and federal affairs at Associated Industries of Florida. “The Northern Turnpike Connector, along with the Southwest-Central Florida Connector and the Suncoast Connector, will lead to an increase in economic opportunity, and Associated Industries of Florida is proud to support this project. The proposed corridors will especially help connect rural counties, generating additional revenue to strengthen local economies throughout the state and boost Florida’s economy.”

The Northern Turnpike Connector is one of the three corridors being studied as part of the M-CORES program. The Northern Turnpike Connector extends from the northern terminus of the

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Florida Turnpike northwest to the Suncoast Parkway, through Levy, Marion, Citrus and Sumter Counties.

The M-CORES program, as detailed on the Florida M-CORES website, “is intended to revitalize rural communities, encourage job creation and provide regional connectivity while leveraging technology, enhancing the quality of life and public safety, and protecting the environment and natural resources. The program was signed into law by Governor Ron DeSantis on May 17, 2019.”

In addition to the Northern Turnpike Connector, the other two regional corridors being studied are the Suncoast Connector and the Southwest-Central Florida Connector. According to the Florida M-CORES website, “the task force will summarize the results of its analysis in a final report by October 1, 2020.”

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