

#1 Based upon the SC Ethics Commission findings of violations as outlined in a July 19, 2018 letter to Beaufort County Council, under file SEC AO2018-004, this complaint is filed against Beaufort County Council Chairperson Alice Howard for violations of §8-13-1346(C). The violations include misleading and deliberate omissions of public information pertaining to Beaufort County 2026 Transportation Sales Tax Referendum and Ballot Questions. This complaint is against the Presiding Chair as the Presiding party of Council. It references the finding of the SCEC letter found on Page 4, Question 2. The violations have placed the public at extreme and immediate disadvantage when casting an informed vote on the Ballot Initiative, in this election cycle. It erodes public trust in their elected officials.

Two written requests were sent to County Council Chair Alice Howard asking for compliance under §8-13-1346(C) and *Dollar v. Cary*, 569 S.E.2d 731 (N.C. Ct. App. 2002), and AO 2018-004 for equal space and time in newspapers, magazines, other publications and mailings to the public, for myself, my associates and other concerned persons, to present our issues to the public in reference to this referendum. Written requests sent to Ms. Howard's official County Council Email, dated 9/30/2026, 7:50 PM and sent via USPS Priority Mail Express to her office on October 6, 2026, delivered on October 09, 2:41 PM. Additionally, numerous verbal requests were expressed by the undersigned to County Council at their Public Meetings and Presentations held in various locations throughout the county. At no time, was a response or acknowledgement made orally or in writing to the complainant. **See Items 1A & 1B**

#2 The complainant actively made it known to Council the desire to express opposition based upon Council's misleading and omitted information to the public. It is incumbent upon the Council under the purview of the Chairperson to provide all information impartially to the public. Council has scheduled meetings/forums and social postings without notifying the complainant in advance of intent. These actions did not allow adequate time and preparation by opposition to attend, respond or have knowledge of said events, social postings or the existence of active social networks.

Council publically held webpages and social forums are: **Webpage:** <https://beaufortcountypenny.com/>
Social pages: <https://www.facebook.com/beaufortcountysc>, <https://x.com/bftcountysc>,
<https://www.instagram.com/beaufortcountysc> and <https://www.linkedin.com/company/beaufort-county/>
See Items 2A & 2B

#3 Referendum Section 1.3 established projects are to be partially funded by issuance of a \$450,000,000 General Service Bond, to be repaid by the collection of the Sales and use Tax. The total list of Projects equals \$780,000,000. It doesn't show the costs of interest to be repaid, maintenance and other associated fees. There is no indication how these additional costs will affect project scope or possible elimination in the Referendum or Ballot Question #2.

Voters will be voting favorably or unfavorably based on a preferred project. They will have no indication that voting yes on Question #2 may eliminate their preferred project.

Question #1 is supposed to inform the Voter of the 87 Projects. However, the lack of any punctuation that separates the names of the roadways creates a long run-on sentence. There is no indication of a project roadway start or end in the descriptions.
See 3A & 3B

#4 The Presentation of the Referendum at County Council Public Meeting May 11, 2026, lacks the actual document, made available to the public for access. The Presentation to County Council was on May 11, 2026. Documentation in the Agenda Packet was scarce and not informative for the public to inspection. The Presentation was made by Committee Chair and former Bluffton Mayor Lisa Sulka. The fact that Ms. Sulka was the Presenter, not a different Committee member, her status as the former Mayor of a large municipality in Beaufort County could be deemed as using her stature to sway the vote for a Referendum. The County Council Chair allowed this perception to occur, by not requesting the Presentation be made by a different committee member. **See A4 & 4B**

#5 County Council in all of their presentations have repeatedly implied that the Referendum certain items are exempt from the Sales and Use Tax. Only section 2.9 states an item that is exempt from this tax. Sections 2.10 to 2.14 list items as reportable to State Sales Tax authorities. However, they are not specifically identified as "EXEMPT FROM" the Sales and Use Tax. Therefore, there is no legal restrictions from any current or future Council from imposing the Sales and Use Tax upon these items.

This referendum is a contract between the voters and residents of Beaufort County. Their vote is their signature on that contract. However, the voters will be signing this contract without full knowledge of any and all consequences of their vote.

Caveat Emptor!