

Policy Statement on Inclusion and Diversity

Prepared by the RIBTC Conference Planning Committee

The National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation is rooted in the fundamental concepts of collegiality, inclusiveness and mutual respect for the beliefs of all parties. The 22nd National Conference will take place on October 2-5, 2016 in Asheville, North Carolina, and that commitment to inclusion and respect for diversity continues will be well represented throughout the conference program.

While we considered several courses of action due to the passage of HB2, North Carolina's legislation that overrides local non-discrimination policies based on personal identity, it was deemed unfair to all conference supporters to consider canceling or moving the conference at the late date at which the circumstance became known in March. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) committed over 1½ years ago to cancel their own conference in order to work in cooperation with the RIBTC. We appreciate the commitment to the conference and the program, and are striving to make the program beneficial of all North Carolina transit providers as well as rest of the rural and intercity transit community throughout the country.

The Conference is funded by federal grants, registration fees (whose sources include multiple state and local governments nationwide), sponsorships, exhibitor payments, and sponsorships. Cancelling or moving the conference would have jeopardized the resources already collected from those sources, a circumstance unfair to both participants and sponsors. Instead, the Conference Committee has worked hard to ensure that there will be no negative impact on the Conference or its attendees.

Asheville is a vibrant, compassionate, and hospitable community. The City's [vision statement](#) explicitly defines its commitment to diversity and inclusion. [City leaders](#) are working with the Conference Committee and our venues to ensure their own traditions of welcoming all visitors and residents are on full display, and to provide a forum for our Conference's long history of inclusion, equity, and respect. To find out more about the host hotel's commitment to inclusion, as well as other local activities and businesses that support diversity and equality for the LGBTQ community, please visit the [Renaissance's local website](#).

The Conference Committee urges all transportation practitioners who are able to do so to join us for sessions and events that are planned to enhance your professional skills, knowledge, and training. **To Our Colleagues** who, because of your own personal beliefs over the passage of HB2 or, because of agency or organizational policy, are unable to attend please know that we fully understand and empathize with your position.

Presentations from the Conference will be available at our website shortly after conclusion of the events. For further information and conference updates, please visit www.ribtc.org.