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August 25, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I would like to express the Town of Kitty Hawk's strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT's) Bridge Investment Program (BIP) Large Bridge Grant application for the US64 over Alligator River Bridge Replacement Project, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) HB-0001 connecting Tyrrell and Dare Counties.

The existing bridge was constructed in 1960 as a 2.83 mile long, movable swing span bridge (a bridge span moves to allow boats to pass) over the Intracoastal Waterway. Replacement is critical due its age and structural deficiency - scoring just a 31.71 out of 100 in the 2020 sufficiency rating during the inspection. In November of 2019, a \$17 million major rehabilitation project allowed for continued use of the bridge, but those stop-gap repairs are only estimated to increase the functional life of the bridge for another 7 years before even more renovations will be required.

The bridge serves as a vital transportation link between the work force in the historically disadvantaged community (HDC) of Tyrrell County, Census Tract 9601 and tourism and other jobs, goods, and services on the Outer Banks. Tract 9601 is also listed as an Area of Persistent Poverty (APP). In addition, the current bridge provides a critical hurricane evacuation route, as it is one of only two current US highways that access the North Carolina Outer Banks. When service interruptions have taken place on the route, NCDOT has provided temporary park and rides with van services and ferry services to accommodate the needs of the work force due to 100-mile detour alternatives.

The proposed replacement bridge will be a high-rise, fixed-span bridge allowing for uninterrupted vehicular and waterway traffic and eliminating the operational cost of a movable bridge. The replacement bridge will be a longer facility to reduce wetlands impacts and allow improved wildlife crossings. Recent cost increases in roadway construction materials have jeopardized financing this project, rendering MPDG assistance critical. The proposed improvements will benefit operation of the Intracoastal Waterway and ensure waterway freight is not interrupted. Projects like the US64 Bridge Replacement over the Alligator River are the reason the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was passed.

We request your strong consideration of the US 64 Bridge Replacement application for receipt of BIP grant funding.

Respectfully,

D. Craig Garriss

Mayor