STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR

DANIEL H. JOHNSON
SECRETARY

June 29, 2026

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

Subject: Certification of Financial Contribution 2026 Bridge Investment Program Application: **Lake Lure STRONG (Safe Transportation for Regional Opportunity and Network Good repair)**

Dear Secretary Duffy,

Lake Lure STRONG (Safe Transportation for Regional Opportunity and Network Good repair) will replace two bridges in Lake Lure, NC that are vital to reliable emergency response times, access to critical community services, and tourism. This part of western North Carolina is characterized by rugged mountains that constrain viable locations for the roadway network. This has resulted in a limited number of through roads and alternative routes in and around Lake Lure, making both bridges vital to transportation in the region. US 64, along which federal structure number 1610052 (Bridge 52) is located, is the only east-west connection through the 14-mile Hickory Nut Gorge (see Project Location), making it critical to the movement of people and good in the region. Similarly, federal structure number 1610343 (Bridge 343) is the primary means of ingress and egress for Rumbling Bald, a growing 3,000+ acre family-oriented golf course resort community for both tourists and year-round residents.

Both bridges are single points of failure whose detour routes would add between 12.8 and 41.6 miles and upwards of 40 minutes to each trip. Notwithstanding their importance to regional travel and access, both bridges are in fair condition and at risk of falling into poor condition in the next three years, creating significant safety and reliability risks. Neither bridge meets current geometric design standards, and NCDOT estimates that Bridge 343 will fall into poor condition by 2030, while Bridge 52 will fall into poor condition by 2034.

NCDOT is requesting BIP funding to complete preliminary and detailed design, environmental review and permitting, ROW acquisition, and construction activities to address serious structural and design deficiencies, thereby improving the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of people and freight. NCDOT will fund Lake Lure STRONG in the amount of $7,548,464 from the North Carolina State Highway Fund Bridge Replacement Program.

Mailing Address:
NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
SECRETARY'S OFFICE
1501 MAIL SERVICE CENTER
RALEIGH, NC 27699-1501

Telephone: 919-707-2800
Fax: 919-733-9150
Customer Service: 1-877-368-4968

Website: ncdot.gov

Location:
1 S WILMINGTON STREET
RALEIGH, NC 27601

Thank you for your consideration of Lake Lure STRONG for the FY 2026 Bridge Investment Program. If NCDOT can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (919)-707-4320 or via email at mnewsome2@ncdot.gov.

Sincerely,

Signed by:
Mark T. Newsome
9BB9BA20B8D84F8...

Mark T. Newsome
Chief Financial Officer
North Carolina Department of Transportation