



## *Graham County Board of County Commissioners*

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April 15, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao, Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

Please accept this letter of support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT's) application *Continuing Corridor K: Connecting People, Goods, and Services* to the U.S. Department of Transportation's BUILD Program. This project is the outcome of extensive coordination between government agencies, local officials, and environmental stakeholders to ensure a project that meets the local and broader needs for reliability and connectivity, while maintaining environmental sensitivity. Graham County, where the project is located, relies on a few main roads for transportation into and out of the county. These roads are susceptible to mountainous conditions, often rendering them unusable due to wintery weather, landslides, and heavy rain. This project will improve road reliability by increasing the resiliency of existing facilities.

Corridor K is critical to long-distance travel in western North Carolina to surrounding counties and is vital for local trips within Graham County as well. The project will improve connectivity for local and commercial traffic that moves through the area. Increased connectivity is crucial for residents who must travel out of the county for jobs, healthcare, and other critical services, as well as for commercial traffic which must use these roads to transport goods in and out of North Carolina. These improvements will bring about economic benefits for a rural county with a declining workforce.

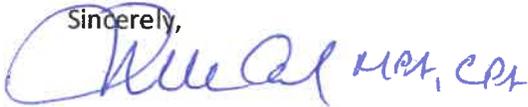
Without this project, local and commercial traffic will continue to face uncertainty as the current road network proves to be unreliable. These improvements will increase the reliability and connectivity of the existing road network, while providing safety and economic benefits, as well the support needed for an improved quality of life.

Graham County is a small rural county on the Tennessee border of North Carolina. Access to medical facilities is vital for our region. Our local hospitals are 45 minutes away to the northeast and southwest, accessible only by two-lane, curvy roads. Our residents have to travel close to an hour to receive

adequate care. We also have several residents needing dialysis, which is only obtainable out of county. From an economic perspective, safe, dependable transportation for traffic allows for tourism to flourish and for commercial traffic to provide the essential goods and services necessary to create a sustainable economy and create and perpetuate a high quality of life in southern Appalachia.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to support the ***Corridor K Improvements*** (STIP Project No. A-0009C) and the NCDOT's application *Continuing Corridor K: Connecting People, Goods, and Services* for federal BUILD grant funding to accelerate its construction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rebecca E. Garland, MPA, CPA". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the initials "RE" being particularly prominent.

Rebecca E. Garland, MPA, CPA  
County Manager