



January 30, 2025

U.S. Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

To The Selection Committee:

I would like to express my support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT's) **Bridges not Barriers – A collaborative Bridge Bundle Replacement Project** ("the Project") application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program. The Project offers an opportunity to replace 15 bridges maintained by NCDOT across Division 10 in North Carolina. Division 10 is comprised of Anson County, Cabarrus County, Mecklenburg County, Stanly County, and Union County. The project is part of a coordinated effort to replace bridges in disadvantaged communities across the Division.

The Project focuses on the replacement of bridges with a variety of issues including flooding, drift, and/or scour. Four of the bridges are low water bridges and are especially susceptible to extreme weather events. Eleven bridges are load posted and nine of the bridges experience flooding. Nine bridges experience scour, and five experience significant drift that needs to be regularly cleared, significantly increasing operations and maintenance costs. The bridges range from 42 years to 80 years, with sufficiency ratings between 37 and 73 percent. The Project will provide an opportunity to replace aged bridges that otherwise might not be replaced in a timely manner due to their prioritization level compared to other bridge projects in the Division. The removal of recurring flooding, scour, and drift issues will reduce regular maintenance, decreasing cost burdens to the State. This will allow NCDOT to stretch resources further and allocate them to other areas in need across Division 10 and the state.

Implementation of the Project is expected to foster increased accessibility to community members and foster improved emergency response that is not burdened by detours in the event extreme weather events. These bridge replacements are extremely important to the local community and region, as well as benefit impoverished residents within the project area. I appreciate your consideration of this important project.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debbie R. Smith".

Debbie Smith, Director