



## North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

**Steven W. Troxler**  
Commissioner

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

Subject: FY2026 Bridges not Barriers - A collaborative Bridge Bundle Replacement Project BUILD Grant Application

Dear Secretary Duffy,

Please accept this letter of support for the FY2026 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) application for the **Bridges not Barriers – A collaborative Bridge Bundle Replacement Project** (“the Project” hereafter) submitted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). This Project will address the challenges of improving both the physical and economic connectivity in several North Carolina rural agricultural counties.

North Carolina has a large agricultural presence, and these rural communities are national leaders in the production of poultry and eggs, sweet potatoes, tobacco, and other products. Agriculture supports approximately 16 percent of the state’s workforce and contributes \$111.1 billion in state economic impact. The North Carolina agricultural industry’s connectivity relies heavily on smaller, two-lane routes that serve as key agricultural corridors that provide access to the markets needed by farmers in these rural areas of North Carolina.

The Project offers an opportunity to replace fifteen bridges maintained by NCDOT across Division 10 in North Carolina, which is comprised of Anson, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg, Stanly, and Union Counties. The project is part of a coordinated effort to replace primarily rural bridges that experience a variety of problems including flooding, drift, and/or scour. Four of the bridges are low water bridges and are especially susceptible to extreme weather events. Twelve bridges are load posted and six of the bridges are considered structurally deficient. Nine bridges experience scour, and five experience significant drift that needs to be regularly cleared out, significantly increasing operations and maintenance costs. The bridges range from 43 years to 81 years old, with sufficiency ratings between 41 and 73 percent.

For agricultural haulers, the loss of any of these bridges would result in greater costs to the producer. Replacing these fifteen bridges will reduce transportation expenses for agricultural users and other commercial shippers by eliminating costly detours. Safeguarding access to these key bridges will help bring greater economic competitiveness to these rural areas and significantly benefit farmers and other agricultural assets, as well as protect the supply chains of other goods and services.

The implementation of North Carolina’s **Bridges not Barriers – A collaborative Bridge Bundle Replacement Project** will improve physical and economic connectivity in North Carolina’s rural agricultural communities, while aligning with the missions of both NCDOT and North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS).

Thank you for your consideration of NCDOT’s application for federal competitive grant funding.

Sincerely,

Steven W. Troxler  
Commissioner N.C. Department of Agriculture