



NORTH CAROLINA  
**DEPARTMENT of  
COMMERCE**

Josh Stein  
GOVERNOR

Lee Lilley  
SECRETARY

February 19, 2026

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

*RE: REST (Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation): FY 2026 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program*

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Commerce, I am pleased to express my support for the **Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST)** or “the Project”), submitted to USDOT’s 2026 BUILD program. The Project will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new commercial motor vehicle (CMV) parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert motor carriers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead. Additionally, REST will construct a new Welcome Center Facility to better meet the needs of both truckers and traveling families with upgraded amenities and improvements to the user experience that improve safety and convenience at the 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited Welcome Center in NC.

While welcome centers are constructed and maintained by the NC Department of Transportation, the NC Department of Commerce operates and staffs each center with nationally certified travel counselors. Located on interstate highways just inside the state line, each welcome center has a statewide focus, with an emphasis on providing information for visitors including travel guides and other marketing publications, and the ability to book room reservations at no charge for visitors staying overnight. The centers also offer clean, modern facilities for visitors.

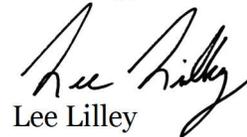
As North Carolina ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation for domestic visitation, the tourism economy is a critical component to the state’s economic vitality. In 2024, North Carolina’s tourism economy hit a record \$36.7 billion in visitor spending. This industry supports over 230,000 jobs, representing 6.2 percent of total state employment, and generates nearly \$4.6 billion in tax revenue. The I-77 North Welcome Center is located on southbound I-77 at milepost 105, just south of Virginia state line. I-77 is a key tourism corridor that connects the southeast to major midwestern markets.

Of the approximately 39,000 vehicles cross into NC from Virginia on I-77 daily, a significant percentage – 33 percent – are CMVs transporting goods. As the leading manufacturing state in the Southeast U.S., North Carolina thrives on making and transporting goods. Manufacturing is a cornerstone of North Carolina’s economy, contributing over 15 percent of the state’s GDP with \$114 billion in economic impact and supporting over 467,000 jobs. Keeping products productively, efficiently and safely moving to and from our state is imperative.

Unfortunately, the I-77 Welcome Center experiences excessive truck parking along the entrance and exit ramps, as well as the emergency ramp/runaway truck lane in the mornings and evenings. REST will improve the visitor experience and increase the safety of visitors and tourists with a newly constructed welcome center. REST will also allow motor carriers to find safe parking options, reducing the risks of fatigue-related impairment and traffic safety for both the drivers and the traveling public, ensuring efficient and productive movements of goods throughout the state.

North Carolina is recognized as the #1 state to do business in the nation. Investments like the REST Project will provide the essential improvements and modernization needed to continue to support our strong economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lee Lilley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lee" and last name "Lilley" clearly distinguishable.

Lee Lilley

CC: Sec. Daniel Johnson, NC Department of Transportation  
Jim McCleskey, NC Washington Office

# TOWN OF ELKIN

**MAYOR**  
Will Gwyn

**TOWN MANAGER**  
Brent Cornelison

**TOWN ATTORNEY**  
Raymond A. Parker



## COMMISSIONERS

Robert Ball

Jeff Eidson

Alvin Hayes

Cicely McCulloch

Graham Ray

February 16, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the Town of Elkin, I am pleased to express our strong support for **Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST or "the Project")**, submitted to USDOT's 2026 BUILD program. The Project will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new freight truck parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert drivers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead. Additionally, REST will construct a new Welcome Center Facility to better meet the needs of both truckers and traveling families with upgraded amenities and improvements to the user experience that improve safety and convenience at the 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited Welcome Center in NC.

However, the corridor faces severe truck parking shortages, and freight truck drivers are often forced to park illegally on interstate ramps and shoulders to stay within federal Hours Of Service (HOS) regulations. This is especially true at Exit 85 here in Elkin. Not only does it create safety hazards and destroy existing asphalt shoulders, but it also creates a large amount of trash left on the off/on ramps.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brent Cornelison".

Brent Cornelison, Town Manager

*David Moxley, Chairman  
Frank Zachary, Vice Chairman  
Cliff Collins, Commissioner  
Ricky Oliver, Commissioner  
Tim Parks, Commissioner*



*Ed Powell, County Attorney  
Michael Silverman, County Manager  
Tanya Gentry, Clerk to the Board*

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), I am pleased to express our strong support for Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST or “the Project”), submitted to USDOT’s 2026 BUILD program. The Project will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new freight truck parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert drivers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead. Additionally, REST will construct a new Welcome Center Facility to better meet the needs of both truckers and traveling families with upgraded amenities and improvements to the user experience that improve safety and convenience at the 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited Welcome Center in NC.

I-77 is a key commercial and tourism corridor that connects the southeast to major midwestern markets. Approximately 39,000 vehicles cross into NC from Virginia on I-77 daily; 33% of that traffic volume (13,420) are freight trucks transporting goods which are the backbone of NC’s economic vitality.

However, the corridor faces severe truck parking shortages, and freight truck drivers are often forced to park illegally on interstate ramps and shoulders to stay within federal Hours Of Service (HOS) regulations. This damages pavement, blocks emergency response, and creates hazards in an area already challenged by steep grades and harsh winter weather; particularly along on- and off-ramps that are high-conflict zones with limited sight distance.

Additionally, the corridor’s lack of freight truck parking reduces productivity and incurs additional costs for motor carriers; research from the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) shows that truckers regularly terminate trips or end their HOS regimen early to find scarce parking, forfeiting 56 minutes of drive time per day and costing approximately \$4,600 in lost compensation. Freight truck drivers who are unable to find safe parking are at greater risk of fatigue-related impairment, increasing safety risks for the traveling public. Indeed, according to the FMCSA, North Carolina was in the top 10 states for fatal truck-involved crashes between 2018-2022, and research shows that 10- 20 percent of all US truck crashes involve fatigued drivers. By expanding truck parking, REST will reduce crash risks and support the needs of truckers who are key to the state’s economic competitiveness.

*David Moxley, Chairman  
Frank Zachary, Vice Chairman  
Cliff Collins, Commissioner  
Ricky Oliver, Commissioner  
Tim Parks, Commissioner*



*Ed Powell, County Attorney  
Michael Silverman, County Manager  
Tanya Gentry, Clerk to the Board*

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Silverman".

Michael Silverman  
Yadkin County Manager



*City of Winston-Salem*

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

POST OFFICE BOX 2511 • WINSTON-SALEM, NC 27102

J. ALLEN JOINES  
MAYOR

February 16, 2026

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

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The Honorable Sean Duffy  
REST  
Page 2

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The City of Winston-Salem views this Welcome Center as a strong part of our visitor economy in Winston-Salem, and as support for the trucking industry that is vital to our local economic make up.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Allen Joines". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "J".

J. Allen Joines  
Mayor



# TOWN OF YADKINVILLE

"A TOWN IN PROGRESS"

February 19, 2026

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

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Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael R. Koser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Michael R. Koser, PE  
Town of Yadkinville  
Town Manager



## TOWN OF WILKESBORO

*"Where the Mountains Begin"*

P.O. Box 1056 • 203 West Main Street  
Wilkesboro, North Carolina 28697  
[www.wilkesboronc.org](http://www.wilkesboronc.org)

Phone (336) 838•3951 • Fax (336) 838•7616

February 23, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), I am pleased to express our strong support for **Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST or "the Project")**, submitted to USDOT's 2026 BUILD program. The Project will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new freight truck parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert drivers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead. Additionally, REST will construct a new Welcome Center Facility to better meet the needs of both truckers and traveling families with upgraded amenities and improvements to the user experience that improve safety and convenience at the 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited Welcome Center in NC.

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DALE L. ISOM  
Mayor

KENNETH D. NOLAND  
Town Manager  
[townmanager@wilkesboronc.org](mailto:townmanager@wilkesboronc.org)

DONNA RHODES  
Town Clerk  
Human Resources

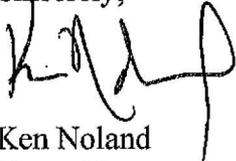
JIMMY HAYES  
DOUG SETZER  
ANDREW "ANDY" SOOTS  
Council Members

RONNIE WALSH  
Mayor Pro Tem

As a local government partner along the I-77 corridor, the Town of Wilkesboro strongly supports the REST project and its focus on improving safety, reliability, and infrastructure for both commercial and passenger traffic traveling through northwestern North Carolina. Our community depends on I-77 for economic connectivity, tourism, and the efficient movement of goods, and we routinely experience the downstream impacts of freight congestion, driver fatigue, and limited safe truck parking along this corridor. Investments that expand safe, legal truck parking and modernize welcome center facilities will directly enhance roadway safety, reduce enforcement and emergency response challenges for local jurisdictions, and support the long-term economic vitality of our region.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Noland', written over a faint horizontal line.

Ken Noland  
Town Manager



**February 20, 2026**

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

Dear Secretary Duffy,

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), I am pleased to express our strong support for **Rest Area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST or “the Project”)**, submitted to USDOT’s 2026 BUILD program. The Project will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new freight truck parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert drivers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead. Additionally, REST will construct a new Welcome Center Facility to better meet the needs of both truckers and traveling families with upgraded amenities and improvements to the user experience that improve safety and convenience at the 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited Welcome Center in NC.

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involve fatigued drivers. By expanding truck parking, REST will reduce crash risks and support the needs of truckers who are key to the state's economic competitiveness.

Pilot Mountain is a town with a population of 1,500 that provides essential comforts while maintaining small-town charm. You can enjoy life at a slower pace, with friendly people, and walkable neighborhoods without sacrificing convenience.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Kiger". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Donna Kiger, Mayor  
Town of Pilot Mountain, NC

# TOWN OF HILLSVILLE

P.O. Box 545  
410 N. Main St.  
Hillsville, Virginia 24343

Website: [www.townofhillsville.com](http://www.townofhillsville.com)  
Email: [leanna@townofhillsville.com](mailto:leanna@townofhillsville.com)

Historic District 2001  
Telephone: 276-728-2128  
Fax: 276-728-9371

February 23, 2026

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

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The Town of Hillsville will benefit from this greatly and we fully support this project.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "LeAnna Surratt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and a stylized "S" at the end.

LeAnna Surratt, MGT  
Town Manager



# North Carolina State Highway Patrol

Josh Stein  
Governor

Freddy L. Johnson, Jr.  
Commander

February 22, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), I am pleased to express our strong support for **Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST or “the Project”)**, submitted to USDOT’s 2026 BUILD program. The Project will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new freight truck parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert drivers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead. Additionally, REST will construct a new Welcome Center Facility to better meet the needs of both truckers and traveling families with upgraded amenities and improvements to the user experience that improve safety and convenience at the 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited Welcome Center in NC.

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**MAILING ADDRESS:**  
4231 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-4231  
[www.ncshp.gov](http://www.ncshp.gov)



*An Equal Opportunity Employer*

**OFFICE LOCATION:**  
512 N. Salisbury St.  
Raleigh, NC 27604  
Telephone: (919) 733-7952  
Fax: (919) 715-4059

**The North Carolina Highway Patrol strongly endorses** the initiative to expand safe truck parking areas at the I-77 Welcome Center. As a critical node in our transportation infrastructure, this project will address acute truck parking shortages that endanger both truckers and the driving public. The addition of 30 new parking spaces, along with enhanced monitoring systems, will ensure that truck drivers have safe, legal places to rest, significantly reducing the risk of fatigue-related accidents. This project is crucial for maintaining the safety and efficiency of our roadways, particularly given the high volume of commercial traffic that traverses I-77 daily. The enhancements will not only improve safety but also support the economic vitality of North Carolina by facilitating the smooth transport of goods across our state.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Col. F.L. Johnson, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Colonel Freddy L. Johnson, Jr.  
Commander, North Carolina State Highway Patrol



## City of Mount Airy

Office of The Mayor

March 6, 2026

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

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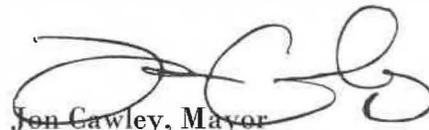
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The City of Mount Airy, located in Surry County, North Carolina, sees these facilities as critical for commuting, freight and economic development. Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Cawley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jon Cawley, Mayor  
City of Mount Airy, North Carolina

February 17, 2026

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



Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), I am pleased to express our strong support for **Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST** or “the Project”), submitted to USDOT’s 2026 BUILD program. The Project will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new freight truck parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert drivers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead. Additionally, REST will construct a new Welcome Center Facility to better meet the needs of both truckers and traveling families with upgraded amenities and improvements to the user experience that improve safety and convenience at the 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited Welcome Center in NC.

I-77 is a key commercial and tourism corridor that connects the southeast to major midwestern markets. Approximately 39,000 vehicles cross into NC from Virginia on I-77 daily; 33% of that traffic volume (13,420) are freight trucks transporting goods which are the backbone of NC’s economic vitality.

However, the corridor faces severe truck parking shortages, and freight truck drivers are often forced to park illegally on interstate ramps and shoulders to stay within federal Hours Of Service (HOS) regulations. This damages pavement, blocks emergency response, and creates hazards in an area already challenged by steep grades and harsh winter weather; particularly along on- and off-ramps that are high-conflict zones with limited sight distance.

Additionally, the corridor’s lack of freight truck parking reduces productivity and incurs additional costs for motor carriers; research from the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) shows that truckers regularly terminate trips or end their HOS regimen early to find scarce parking, forfeiting 56 minutes of drive time per day and costing approximately \$4,600 in lost compensation. Freight truck drivers who are unable to find safe parking are at greater risk of fatigue-related impairment, increasing safety risks for the traveling public. Indeed, according to the FMCSA, North Carolina was in the top 10 states for fatal truck-involved crashes between 2018-2022, and research shows that 10- 20 percent of all US truck crashes involve fatigued drivers. By expanding truck parking, REST will reduce crash risks and support the needs of truckers who are key to the state’s economic competitiveness.

As the statewide advocate for North Carolina’s trucking industry, the North Carolina Trucking Association (NCTA) strongly supports the REST project and its critical role in improving highway safety and operational efficiency for commercial carriers. Since 1929, NCTA has worked to advance safe, sustainable, and efficient trucking operations by partnering closely with NCDOT, the State Highway Patrol, FMCSA, and policymakers to address the regulatory and infrastructure needs of the industry. The REST project directly supports NCTA’s longstanding mission to promote highway safety and reduce risk for professional drivers,

particularly in high-conflict corridors such as I-77. By expanding designated truck parking capacity and deploying modern truck-parking information systems, this project addresses one of the most persistent safety and productivity challenges facing our members. Improved rest area infrastructure will allow carriers to comply with federal Hours of Service rules, reduce fatigue-related hazards, protect pavement from damage caused by unsafe parking, and strengthen the reliability of freight movement across North Carolina. For an industry that is the sole provider of goods to more than 85% of the communities across the state, investments like REST are essential to supporting safe operations, promoting workforce well-being, and ensuring the continued competitiveness of North Carolina's trucking economy.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Greenberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ben Greenberg  
President and CEO  
North Carolina Trucking Association



## GREATER WINSTON-SALEM, INC.

February 17, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), I am pleased to express our strong support for Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST or “the Project”), submitted to USDOT’s 2026 BUILD program. The Project will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new freight truck parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert drivers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead. Additionally, REST will construct a new Welcome Center Facility to better meet the needs of both truckers and traveling families with upgraded amenities and improvements to the user experience that improve safety and convenience at the 3rd most visited Welcome Center in NC.

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## GREATER WINSTON-SALEM, INC.

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Greater Winston-Salem Inc. supports the REST project because I-77 is a vital corridor for freight, business, and tourism in North Carolina. Expanding safe truck parking and adding real-time parking and safety technology will reduce illegal ramp and shoulder parking, improve emergency access, and lower crash risks. These improvements will strengthen supply chain reliability, protect the traveling public, and support the economic competitiveness of our region.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

Mark Owens, I.O.M., CCE  
President & CEO  
Greater Winston-Salem Inc.



February 17, 2026

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

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---

150 Fayetteville St.  
Suite 1200  
Raleigh, NC 27601

(919) 447-7801  
[visitnc.com](http://visitnc.com)





The rest areas in North Carolina are the front porch to economic development and tourism for our state. Each year we welcome more than 7 million visitors. Each Welcome Center has a statewide focus, with an emphasis on information for visitors traveling a particular interstate corridor. Our professional, nationally-certified travel counselors:

- Distribute the state's Official North Carolina Travel Guide, the Department of Transportation's official state map, and other marketing publications exclusively about North Carolina.
- Offer detailed travel information in clean, modern facilities.
- Book room reservations at no charge for visitors staying overnight in North Carolina.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

Wit Tuttell

**Wit Tuttell**  
Executive Director  
Visit North Carolina

---

**Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina**

**O:** 919.447.7740

**E:** [wit@VisitNC.com](mailto:wit@VisitNC.com)

150 Fayetteville St, Ste 1200 | Raleigh, NC 27601



*Email correspondence to and from this address is subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law and may be disclosed to third parties.*

# TOWN OF ELKIN

## MAYOR

Will Gwyn

## TOWN MANAGER

Brent Cornelison

## TOWN ATTORNEY

Raymond A. Parker



## COMMISSIONERS

Robert Ball

Jeff Eidson

Alvin Hayes

Cicely McCulloch

Graham Ray

February 16, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of the Elkin Tourism Development Authority, of Elkin, North Carolina with regards to the North Carolina Department of Transportation **Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST** or "the Project"), submitted to USDOT's 2026 BUILD program. The Project will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new freight truck parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert drivers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead. Additionally, REST will construct a new Welcome Center Facility to better meet the needs of both truckers and traveling families with upgraded amenities and improvements to the user experience that improve safety and convenience at the 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited Welcome Center in NC.

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However, the corridor faces severe truck parking shortages, and freight truck drivers are often forced to park illegally on interstate ramps and shoulders to stay within federal Hours of Service regulations. This damages pavement, blocks emergency response, and creates hazards in an area challenged by steep grades and harsh winter weather; particularly along on- and off-ramps. Specifically, Elkin is in close proximity to this rest area and NIGHTLY sees over 10-15 trucks parked overnight, illegally, despite clear signage prohibiting such parking. When trucks are parked on both sides of the ramps it creates a hazard for other travelling vehicles that no longer have any shoulder access if an emergency arises in their travel.

Freight truck drivers who are unable to find safe parking are at greater risk of fatigue-related impairment, increasing safety risks for the traveling public; according to the FMCSA, North Carolina was in the top 10 states for fatal truck-involved crashes between 2018-2022, and research shows that 10- 20 percent of truck crashes involve fatigued drivers. By expanding truck parking, REST will reduce crash risks and support the needs of truckers who are key to the state's economic competitiveness.

In terms of the Welcome Center, this center is the first impression many visitors have of our local area and the Yadkin Valley region – known for over 50 vineyards and an extensive recreation trails network. Having the center modernized to better represent this critical tourism region of the state is whole heartedly and

enthusiastically supported. Elkin is often the recommended stopping point for visitors with pets and small children who are looking to experience walking trails to 'stretch their legs' during their travelling journeys.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leslie Schlender', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Leslie Schlender, CEcD

Town of Elkin

Elkin Tourism Development Authority



February 25, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), I am pleased to express our strong support for **Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST or “the Project”)**, submitted to USDOT’s 2026 BUILD program. The Project will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new freight truck parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert drivers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead. Additionally, REST will construct a new Welcome Center Facility to better meet the needs of both truckers and traveling families with upgraded amenities and improvements to the user experience that improve safety and convenience at the 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited Welcome Center in NC.

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The Wilkes County Tourism Development Authority endorses this grant application for the sake of the safety of our community and for the potential for future tourism development and commerce. As a rural destination whose economy depends on safe, reliable highway access, Wilkes County understands firsthand how strategic infrastructure investments like REST strengthen public safety, freight efficiency, and long-term tourism growth across northwest North Carolina.



Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

Thomas Salley  
Director  
Wilkes County Tourism



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

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As the operator of the Northwest North Carolina Visitor Center, we understand firsthand that welcome centers are far more than just a place to stop for a map; they are the front door to our community and a vital engine for our local economy. These facilities serve as a traveler's first handshake with a community and the surrounding region, making them a true tourism asset that can turn a brief rest stop into an extended stay at our local shops, restaurants, and hotels.

To maintain this high standard of hospitality, we recognize that continuous investment in our infrastructure is essential. Improvements to parking accessibility and facility modernizations are not just about aesthetics, they are about ensuring every visitor feels safe, welcomed, and inspired.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

All the Best,

*Cindy Thompson*

President

Wilkes Chamber of Commerce

Office: 336-838-8662

Cell: 336-990-2025



February 20, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), I am pleased to express our strong support for **Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST** or “the Project”), submitted to USDOT’s 2026 BUILD program. The Project will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new freight truck parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert drivers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead. Additionally, REST will construct a new Welcome Center Facility to better meet the needs of both truckers and traveling families with upgraded amenities and improvements to the user experience that improve safety and convenience at the 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited Welcome Center in NC.

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The I-77 corridor is a key commercial artery for not only Surry County, but the Southeast as a whole. We experienced directly how important it was in 2024 when damage to I-40 during Helene pushed this route to its limits. The corridor continues to have congestion issues on the off and on ramps with freight truck traffic constantly parked overnight due to the lack of space mentioned throughout this letter. Surry County EDP is in support of continued investment in our commercial corridor that will keep our visitors and residents safe.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blake Moyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "M".

Blake Moyer, CECD  
President & CEO  
Surry County EDP  
336-269-3828  
Blake@surryedp.com



## **Surry County EDP Board of Directors, 2026**

**Chair, Ron Sutphin | Hayco Construction**  
**Vice Chair, Julie Perkins | Perkins Financial**  
**Treasurer, Paul Hammes | Hugh Chatham Health**  
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**Robert Ball | Town of Elkin**  
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**Scott Needham | Town of Pilot Mountain**  
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**Dave Dinkins | Renfro Brands**  
**Thomas Eidson | G&B Energy**  
**Andy Goodall | Town of Pilot Mountain**  
**Dr. Steve Hall | ECS**  
**Melissa Hiatt | County of Surry**  
**Alisha Hutchens | Novant Health**

**Chris Knopf | County of Surry**  
**Ashly Lancaster | GMACC**  
**Darren Lewis | City of Mount Airy**  
**Manny Perez | Carolina Carports**  
**Joanna Radford | NC Ag. Ext.**  
**Dr. Travis Reeves | SCS**  
**Jeff Sedlacek | Town of Dobson**  
**Dr. David Shockley | SCC**  
**David Steelman | YVCC**  
**Phillip Thacker | City of Mount Airy**  
**Matthew Wooten | W-S Farms**  
**Jim York | Insteel Industries**  
**Tammy York | PTC**



**PIEDMONT TRIAD**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

**Creative Regional Solutions**  
Executive Director • Matthew Dolge



1398 Carrollton Crossing Drive  
Kernersville, NC 27284  
336-904-0300

February 23, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), we are pleased to express our strong support for Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST or “the Project”), submitted to USDOT’s 2026 BUILD program. The Project will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new freight truck parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert drivers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead. Additionally, REST will construct a new Welcome Center Facility to better meet the needs of both truckers and traveling families with upgraded amenities and improvements to the user experience that improve safety and convenience at the 3rd most visited Welcome Center in NC.

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The application describes in detail the corridor’s lack of freight truck parking impact on productivity and safety. These requested improvements are critical to this corridor. According to the FMCSA, North Carolina was in the top 10 states for fatal truck-involved crashes between 2018-2022, and research shows that 10- 20 percent of all US truck crashes involve fatigued drivers. By expanding truck parking, REST will reduce crash risks and support the needs of truckers who are key to the state’s economic competitiveness.

The Piedmont Triad Regional Council is the lead regional organization for 12 counties that includes Surry County and the project site along I-77 and operates the Rural Transportation Planning Organization for the area. The normal project prioritization process to select funding for project improvements in the State Transportation Improvement Program would not easily accommodate this critical need for safety and we strongly support the request for BUILD grant funding for this project.

Thank you for your consideration of REST’s BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state’s most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jesse Day".

Jesse Day, Regional Planning Director  
Piedmont Triad Regional Council

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*NORTH CAROLINA LEAGUE OF TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS*

*PO Box 3291*

*Mooresville, North Carolina 28117*

*info@nctl.org*

*www.nctl.com*



February 20, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

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Our organization is committed to supporting anything that makes our industry safer and more efficient. We desire safe drivers transporting products and having sufficient parking opportunities along the way to ensure they are getting enough rest and recovery time. We also support distracted driving initiatives such as no texting while driving, along with the industry having a solid vetting and accountability process to ensure that all drivers operate safely, including being able to read and understand road signs.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

Kevin Perry, Co-Executive Director

North Carolina League of Transportation and Logistics



February 25, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the North Carolina Economic Development Association (NCEDA) and its more than 1,000 members, I am pleased to express our strong support for the **Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation Project (REST** or “the Project”), submitted to USDOT’s 2026 BUILD program by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT).

NCEDA is comprised of local, regional and state economic development professionals and allies in industry, and we recognize the significance of this project for the region. REST will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new freight truck parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert drivers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead.

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Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brittany Brady". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names clearly legible.

Brittany Brady  
President, North Carolina Economic Development Association  
President, Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development



February 19, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), I am pleased to express our strong support for **Rest area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST** or “the Project”), submitted to USDOT’s 2026 BUILD program. The Project will restore and modernize the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina (NC) by adding 30 new freight truck parking spaces alongside a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS) and additional traffic cameras to alert drivers of available parking spaces and dangerous road and weather conditions ahead. Additionally, REST will construct a new Welcome Center Facility to better meet the needs of both truckers and traveling families with upgraded amenities and improvements to the user experience that improve safety and convenience at the 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited Welcome Center in NC.

I-77 is a key commercial and tourism corridor that connects the southeast to major midwestern markets. Approximately 39,000 vehicles cross into NC from Virginia on I-77 daily; 33% of that traffic volume (13,420) are freight trucks transporting goods which are the backbone of NC’s economic vitality.

However, the corridor faces severe truck parking shortages, and freight truck drivers are often forced to park illegally on interstate ramps and shoulders to stay within federal Hours Of Service (HOS) regulations. This damages pavement, blocks emergency response, and creates hazards in an area already challenged by steep grades and harsh winter weather; particularly along on- and off-ramps that are high-conflict zones with limited sight distance.

Additionally, the corridor’s lack of freight truck parking reduces productivity and incurs additional costs for motor carriers; research from the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) shows that truckers regularly terminate trips or end their HOS regimen early to find scarce parking, forfeiting 56 minutes of drive time per day and costing approximately \$4,600 in lost compensation. Freight truck drivers who are unable to find safe parking are at greater risk of fatigue-related impairment, increasing safety risks for the traveling public. Indeed, according to the FMCSA, North Carolina was in the top 10 states for fatal truck-involved crashes between 2018-2022, and research shows that 10- 20 percent of all US truck crashes involve fatigued drivers. By expanding truck parking, REST will reduce crash risks and support the needs of truckers who are key to the state’s economic competitiveness.

Both the Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina (IIANC represents more than 10,000 licensed insurance agents across the state) and the NC Alliance for Safe Transportation (IIANC was instrumental in the launch of NCAST in 2023 as a voice for transportation safety in our state) are strong proponents for infrastructure projects, such as this one, that provide the direct benefit of enhancing highway safety.

Keeping commercial vehicles in safe locations while parked – and providing more space for truck operators to rest - will definitely mitigate significant hazards the lack of adequate parking space presents and contributes to higher crash rates. Fewer collisions mean less human suffering as well as a reduced number of vehicle repairs and medical expenses due to injuries, and that helps prevent the need for costly increases for insurance coverage that impact all motorists.

Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Stewart". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Joe Stewart  
Chief Advocacy Officer, IIANC  
Executive Director, NCAST

101 Weston Oaks Court  
Cary, NC 27513  
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February 20, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the Mount Airy Tourism Development Authority and the Tourism Partnership of Surry County, I am pleased to express our strong support for the Rest Area Expansion for Safe Transportation (REST or “the Project”), submitted to USDOT’s 2026 BUILD program. The proposed restoration and modernization of the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County is a strategic investment that will enhance roadway safety, strengthen freight mobility, and significantly improve the visitor experience at one of North Carolina’s most heavily traveled gateways.

The Project’s addition of 30 new freight truck parking spaces, implementation of a Truck Parking Information Management System (TPIMS), and installation of additional traffic cameras will address critical safety and operational deficiencies along this corridor. Constructing a new Welcome Center facility with upgraded amenities will better serve both commercial drivers and traveling families, improving accessibility, comfort, and overall user experience at the third most visited Welcome Center in North Carolina.

I-77 is both a major commercial artery and a primary tourism corridor connecting the Southeast to Midwestern markets. Approximately 39,000 vehicles cross into North Carolina from Virginia each day along I-77, and roughly one-third of that volume consists of freight trucks transporting goods that are foundational to the state’s economy. However, severe truck parking shortages along this corridor create significant safety concerns. Drivers are frequently forced to park along ramps and shoulders to comply with federal Hours of Service regulations, contributing to infrastructure damage, obstructed emergency response, and heightened crash risk in an area already challenged by steep grades, limited sight distance, and winter weather conditions.

Expanding safe truck parking capacity will directly reduce fatigue-related risk and improve overall corridor safety. Research from the American Transportation Research Institute shows



drivers lose an average of 56 minutes per day searching for parking, with measurable economic consequences. Addressing this shortage supports freight efficiency, reduces unsafe parking practices, and protects both commercial operators and the traveling public.

Equally important, the I-77 North Welcome Center serves as a first impression of North Carolina for millions of visitors each year. Surry County and the City of Mount Airy function as gateway communities to the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Yadkin Valley Wine Region, welcoming travelers seeking heritage tourism, outdoor recreation, arts and culture, and culinary experiences. A modernized Welcome Center enhances our ability to engage travelers at the point of entry—encouraging extended stays, increasing visitor spending, and strengthening room occupancy tax collections that fund local tourism development initiatives.

The REST Project represents more than infrastructure improvement; it is an investment in safety, economic vitality, and destination competitiveness. By modernizing one of the state's most strategically located welcome centers and addressing a documented truck parking shortage, this project will improve operational efficiency while reinforcing North Carolina's reputation as a safe, welcoming, and travel-ready state.

Thank you for your consideration of this important BUILD grant application. We strongly support REST and its role in strengthening both North Carolina's transportation network and its tourism economy.

Sincerely,

Jessica I. Roberts  
Executive Director  
Mount Airy Tourism Development Authority  
Tourism Partnership of Surry County



2/19/2026

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

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However, the corridor faces severe truck parking shortages, and freight truck drivers are often forced to park illegally on interstate ramps and shoulders to stay within federal Hours Of Service (HOS) regulations. This damages pavement, blocks emergency response, and creates hazards in an area already challenged by steep grades and harsh winter weather; particularly along on- and off-ramps that are high-conflict zones with limited sight distance.

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The Surry County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) was established by the North Carolina General Assembly in 2009. The Authority expends remitted occupancy tax revenues to promote travel and tourism in the unincorporated areas of the county. The Authority participates in the Tourism Partnership of Surry County, a collaboration with the four municipal TDA’s (i.e. Dobson, Elkin, Mount Airy, and Pilot Mountain). The Tourism Partnership manages a countywide marketing program with funding provided by all five TDA’s.



Thank you for your consideration of REST's BUILD grant application to deliver essential improvements that support the motor carriers who keep our economy moving while modernizing one of the state's most heavily visited rest areas.

Sincerely,

Travis Frye, Tourism Coordinator  
Surry County TDA



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Account Sales Manager  
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February 23, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, I am pleased to express our strong support for the Rest Area Expansion for Safe Transportation project, submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation's 2026 BUILD program. The proposed restoration and modernization of the I-77 North Welcome Center in Surry County, North Carolina, represents an important investment in roadway safety, visitor services, and an enhanced regional tourism economy.

The project's planned improvements—including expanded parking capacity for freight trucks, enhanced traveler information systems, and the construction of a modernized welcome center facility—will significantly improve safety and convenience for both commercial drivers and the traveling public. Equally important, the new visitor center will serve as a critical gateway for travelers, providing high-quality information about nearby destinations, including the Blue Ridge Parkway and its surrounding gateway communities.

Interstate 77 is a vital commercial and tourism corridor connecting the southeastern United States with major midwestern markets. Each day, tens of thousands of vehicles stop at the welcome center on I-77 North, making it one of the most visited welcome centers in North Carolina. This high volume underscores the opportunity to engage travelers at a key moment—encouraging safe travel decisions, while also inspiring exploration of local destinations.

The Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation supports this project because of its alignment with our Blue Ridge Rising initiative, which focuses on improving the economic wellbeing of gateway communities along the Parkway corridor. By directing travelers to local communities, attractions, and outdoor recreation opportunities, the enhanced welcome center will help convert pass-through traffic into meaningful visitation—supporting small businesses, local economies, and sustainable tourism throughout the region.

For these reasons, we strongly support the REST Project and believe it represents a thoughtful, high-impact investment in transportation safety, economic development, and visitor engagement for North Carolina.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Widner, CEO  
Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation