



⊠ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ⊠

Cameron Ingram, Executive Director

July 27, 2023

Grant Selection Committee Members
Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program
United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration

Subject: Letter of support for Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program (WCPP) grant application for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's I-26 Wildlife Fence project in Madison County, North Carolina

Dear Grant Selection Committee Members,

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) supports the subject project which was developed with the North Carolina Department of Transportation in accordance with a recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU formalized inter-agency coordination on wildlife conservation, highway safety, and mitigation needs on existing and developing highway projects in North Carolina. The following comments on the application are offered in accordance with applicable provisions of the state and federal Environmental Policy Acts (G.S. 113A-1 through 113-10; 1 NCAC 25 and 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c), respectively) and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661-667d).

This project would add wildlife fencing to a section of interstate that already has two dedicated wildlife crossing structures and one large bridge overpass. As noted by research, there is abundant wildlife activity in the area and the existing control-of-access fencing has limited effectiveness at controlling or directing wildlife. The NCWRC supports the application because the project should improve habitat connectivity for several species of wildlife, reduce wildlife vehicle collisions on a high-speed roadway, increase knowledge about implementing wildlife passage measures in mountainous terrain in the eastern United States, and help realize the benefits of wildlife passage investments that already have been made on this roadway.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on and support for this project. Please contact me at david.mchenry@ncwildlife.org or (828) 476-1966 if you have any questions about these comments.

Cordially, 

Dave McHenry, NCWRC Western DOT Coordinator