



## ☒ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ☒

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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-40 CATCH project in Haywood 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 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 increase available dry passage area for wildlife at existing, aging stream culverts under I-40 in the Pigeon River Gorge, an area that is bounded by extensive National Forest and diverse wildlife habitats. In tandem with wildlife fencing, structure improvements would improve the ability of wildlife, particularly meso-mammals, to avoid or bypass this section of 4-lane roadway and its concrete barrier median. The NCWRC supports the application because the project should improve habitat connectivity for several species of wildlife, reduce wildlife vehicle collisions, increase knowledge about implementing wildlife passage measures in mountainous terrain in the eastern United States, and complement other wildlife passage investments that already have been developed by NCDOT elsewhere on I-40.

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

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. McHenry'.

Dave McHenry, NCWRC Western DOT Coordinator