



◊ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ◊

Cameron Ingram, Executive Director

August 29, 2024

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,

As the state agency charged with protecting North Carolina's fish and wildlife resources, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) supports NCDOT's application for I-26 wildlife fence 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.

This project would add wildlife fencing to a section of interstate that currently 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 in support of this project.

Sincerely,

Cameron N. Ingram, Executive Director