



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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BUTCH ELEY
DEPUTY GOVERNOR &
COMMISSIONER OF TRANSPORTATION

BILL LEE
GOVERNOR

August 1, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: I-40 SAFE PASSAGE

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) in cooperation with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) appreciates your consideration of our joint application for funding under the FY 2022-2023 Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program. Our joint grant application funds a Wildlife Connectivity Corridor Feasibility Study on I-40 in the Pigeon River Gorge, project I-40 SAFE PASSAGE.

Project I-40 SAFE PASSAGE, facilitated by NCDOT in coordination and cooperation with TDOT, aims to conduct a targeted corridor feasibility study along 28 miles of Interstate 40 within the Pigeon River Gorge on the border of NC and TN. The purpose of the study is to significantly advance our agencies' understanding of the full range of wildlife mitigation opportunities available along this critical roadway. This feasibility study is critical to ensuring future construction projects in the Pigeon River Gorge fully consider wildlife connectivity while reducing wildlife vehicle collisions and improving motor vehicle safety.

TDOT is committed to protecting our natural resources while ensuring continued safety improvements for our vital corridors.

Please let us know if you have any questions or need additional information. Our point of contact is Mr. Dan Pallme, Assistant Bureau Chief of the Environment & Planning Bureau. He may be reached at (615) 741-4031 or at Daniel.Pallme@tn.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Howard H. Eley".

Howard H. Eley
Commissioner of Transportation