



CAROLINAS GATEWAY PARTNERSHIP

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Secretary James H. Trogdon III
North Carolina Department of Transportation
1501 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1501

Dear Secretary Trogdon:

Please accept this letter of support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT's) ***I-95 /Future I-87 Rural Corridor, Resiliency, and Innovative Technology Improvements Project*** application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's INFRA Program. The Project is the outcome of a thoughtful combination of multiple complementary investments and coordinated strategy to improve corridor performance, freight mobility, infrastructure resiliency, build out and harden the network of freight distribution/military corridors and digital connectivity of rural communities in eastern North Carolina.

The I-95 Corridor is critical to long-distance travel up and down the East Coast and is vital for local trips within North Carolina as well. Given its location along the eastern seaboard with multiple river crossings, I-95, as currently designed, is vulnerable to flooding. The Project widens 27-miles of I-95 to eight (8) lanes, from Exit 13 to 40 between Lumberton and Fayetteville and raises two bridges near Lumberton and several low-lying portions of the road that are susceptible to flooding. It also includes state-of-the-art flood monitoring technology in order to manage evacuation routes in real time.

The Future I-87 Corridor traverses rural eastern North Carolina, connecting Raleigh, NC and the Hampton Roads-Norfolk region in Virginia to serve as an interstate connection between the destinations. The project will improve the road to interstate standards from Zebulon to Williamston and include upgrades to several interchanges. The Project will also make improvements to mitigate road flooding in the Princeville area.

Future I-87 and the US-64 extension to the coast are important evacuation routes. The Project will install fiber optic cable along the entire length of the Future I-87 corridor, as well as the extension of US-64. The project will include wind and flood monitoring, management of the corridor in a coordinated manner with I-95 and US-70 (Future I-42) where fiber is already being installed, preparation for future autonomous vehicles and enhance broadband capability in this underserved rural area.

The Carolinas Gateway Partnership is a public-private recruiting operation dedicated to the economic growth of all Eastern North Carolina with emphasis on the twin counties of Nash and Edgecombe. Our two counties, 18 cities, towns and municipalities work collaboratively to bring outstanding companies into our area to enjoy a region that is rich in quality of life opportunities, strong educational capability, an abundant well qualified, hardworking workforce and a very positive business climate for industry and agriculture.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to support the ***I-95 /Future I-87 Rural Corridor, Resiliency, and Innovative Technology Improvements Project*** and the NCDOT's application for federal INFRA grant funding to accelerate its construction.

Sincerely,



E. Norris Tolson
President/CEO

Carolinas Gateway Partnership



Oppie Jordan
Vice President

Carolinas Gateway Partnership