



Corporate Office

100 N. Main Street, Suite 200, Belmont, NC 28012

April 13, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
United States Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Interstate 85 from Charlotte to Atlanta connects the nation's third largest economic region. It is a critical transportation corridor supporting not only Gaston County's growing economic vibrancy, but the overall U.S. economy as well. Consequently, I am writing on behalf of Wilbert Plastic Services to express strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) application for the I-85: FUn ding Transportation Utilizing Resilient, Equitable, Solutions (I-85 FUTURES) project in Gaston and Cleveland Counties.

There has been a documented need to improve I-85 for several decades. Since 1991, when NCDOT first explored the potential construction of another high-speed crossing of the Catawba River, the necessity to increase the capacity of this high-volume interstate corridor has been unquestioned. The Gaston County portion currently experiences frequent delays due to general congestion and becomes almost impassible when accidents occur. Unfortunately, recent material increases for roadway construction have complicated financing for this important project, rendering MPDG assistance even more crucial.

Wilbert Plastic Services is a premier injection molding and thermoforming plastic solution provider, supporting many leading OEMs in eight industrial and commercial markets. Headquartered in Gaston County, the company operates three plants along the I-85 corridor. We understand firsthand how conditions on I-85 negatively impact our day-to-day operations. I-85 traffic congestion – in both directions – has and continues to cause late material deliveries impacting our production activities and efficiencies. It also leads to difficulty in contracting logistical services as the logistics companies prioritize assigning work to other areas due to the unpredictability of the traffic situation and the cost incurred when their equipment gets delayed by the I-85 congestion. Furthermore, the well-publicized negative traffic issues associated with I-85 inhibit our ability to attract new employees in an already challenging labor market.

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Enhancements included in the I-85 FUTURES project are important to our business and we fully support it as a means of alleviating these serious transportation issues.

Thank you for your strong consideration of NCDOT's I-85 FUTURES application for MPDG grant funding.

Sincerely,



Greg M. Botner
President & CEO