



APPENDIX B

Letters of Support

May 19, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Regional Transportation Alliance, the voice of the regional business community on transportation in North Carolina's Research Triangle area, I am writing to express our support for NCDOT's **Future I-87 Revitalization, Innovation, Safety, Economy Project** application for the Department of Transportation's Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant program.

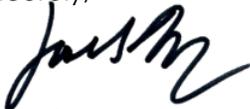
The Project will upgrade more than 60 miles of US 64 between Raleigh and Edgecombe County to interstate standards, improving freight mobility and rural access across portions of eastern North Carolina, including exchanges with I-95 and CSX Transportation's Carolina Connector (CCX) Intermodal Rail Terminal, with the future goal of reaching the Port of Virginia at Norfolk.

The Project will also fortify a section of US 64 that serves as part of the United States Army Corps of Engineers levee system protecting the Town of Princeville, an historic African American town that is experiencing increasingly frequent and severe flooding events. These improvements will mitigate road flooding and address environmental justice concerns amidst climate change.

The US 64 / future I-87 corridor will connect metropolitan and rural eastern North Carolina, providing much needed investment to serve and advance an underserved region of North Carolina that has not proportionally shared in the state's prosperity.

The regional business community strongly recommends that FY 2022 funding under the MPDG grant program be allocated to NCDOT for this initiative. If you have any questions, please contact me at 919.664.7065 or joe@letsgetmoving.org.

Sincerely,



Executive Director,
Regional Transportation Alliance



May 20, 2022

Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The program of investments outlined in the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT's) **Future I-87 Revitalization, Innovation, Safety, Economy Project** (the "Future I-87 RISE Project" or "the Project") application to the Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant (MPDG) Program offers an opportunity to improve surface transportation in rural areas of eastern North Carolina. The RISE Project is the outcome of a systematic and coordinated strategy to improve safety, regional and national economic vitality, rural broadband adoption, and climate change resilience in eastern North Carolina through improvement of one of the state's Strategic Transportation Corridors.

The Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce strongly supports this innovative and much needed Project. The Future I-87 RISE Project will begin the process of converting US 64 to interstate standards. Specifically, the Project would improve freight mobility and rural access between Raleigh and Princeville, which includes I-95 and the CSX's new Carolina Connector (CCX) Intermodal Rail Terminal, with the future goal of reaching the Port of Virginia. By strategically upgrading this section of future I-87, the project will provide much needed investment to serve and fortify an underserved, rural region of North Carolina that has not proportionally shared in the state's prosperity.

The Project will improve over sixty (60) miles of US 64 to interstate standards while fortifying a section of US 64 that is part of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) levee system protecting the vulnerable Town of Princeville, an historic African American town that is experiencing increasingly frequent and severe flooding events. These improvements will mitigate road flooding and address environmental justice concerns being exacerbated by climate change. Collectively, the Project will offer rural communities safer and more reliant travel options for both residents and businesses. Moreover, future I-87 and the US 64 are important evacuation routes for coastal communities; the Project's upgrades will ensure these roadways function optimally during weather emergencies to safely and efficiently allow eastern North Carolina residents to get out of harm's way.

The Project is a step toward realizing North Carolina's vision of resilient freight distribution corridors in eastern North Carolina. The planned future I-87 corridor traverses rural eastern North Carolina, connecting Raleigh, NC at its southern terminus and ultimately, the Hampton Roads-Norfolk region in Virginia at its northern terminus. When fully completed, this future corridor will serve as a second interstate connection between the Port of Virginia and I-95 offering multiple options for goods movement and supply chain resiliency.

Improvements along the future I-87 corridor will also maximize the \$270M investment in the Carolina Connector Intermodal Rail Terminal (CCX) by strengthening the highway connections between CCX, the I-95 corridor, and Raleigh. The combined investment between the Future I-87 RISE Project and CCX will increase the efficiency of



goods movement within the region, producing both regional and national supply chain improvements and economic benefits within our rural communities.

While the Project addresses multiple evaluation criteria for the MPDG program, improving the economic competitiveness of eastern North Carolina's rural communities along future I-87 lies at the heart of this project. This MPDG grant, when combined with significant state investment in resilience measures throughout the Project corridor, and an \$39.6 million investment by the United States Army Corps of Engineers to protect Princeville from flooding, would immediately improve safety, address key bottlenecks, and further the backbone of our freight network while simultaneously improving the resiliency of communities along a key evacuation route used during extreme weather events. The Project is a prudent investment that will increase the return on prior federal and state investments and proactively protect existing transportation assets, thereby preventing future losses.

The benefit for our two County area Rocky Mount MSA can not be overstated. We are well on our way to growing jobs from the CSX Intermodal as well as industrial jobs from the Kingboro site. The intersection of I-95 and I-87 carries the highest four-way traffic count in the state of North Carolina along the I-95 corridor. This has attracted a national developer who is working to bring industrial as well as Retail and office space to our area. The Interstate corridor will continue to experience growth from this project as well as the increased travel east to our Great Outer Banks.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to support the ***Future I-87 Resiliency, Innovation, Safety, Economy Project*** and the NCDOT's application for federal MPDG grant funding to accelerate its construction.

Sincerely,

Alan Matthews
Director, Economic Development
Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce

Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The program of investments outlined in the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT's) Future I-87 Revitalization, Innovation, Safety, Economy Project (the "Future I-87 RISE Project" or "the Project") application to the Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant (MPDG) Program offers an opportunity to improve surface transportation in rural areas of eastern North Carolina. The RISE Project is the outcome of a systematic and coordinated strategy to improve safety, regional and national economic vitality, rural broadband adoption, and climate change resilience in eastern North Carolina through improvement of one of the state's Strategic Transportation Corridors.

Edgecombe Tourism Development Authority strongly supports this innovative and much needed Project. The Future I-87 RISE Project will begin the process of converting US 64 to interstate standards. Specifically, the Project would improve freight mobility and rural access between Raleigh and Princeville, which includes I-95 and the CSX's new Carolina Connector (CCX) Intermodal Rail Terminal, with the future goal of reaching the Port of Virginia. By strategically upgrading this section of future I-87, the project will provide much needed investment to serve and fortify an underserved, rural region of North Carolina that has not proportionally shared in the state's prosperity.

The Project will improve over sixty (60) miles of US 64 to interstate standards while fortifying a section of US 64 that is part of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) levee system protecting the vulnerable Town of Princeville, an historic African American town that is experiencing increasingly frequent and severe flooding events. These improvements will mitigate road flooding and address environmental justice concerns being exacerbated by climate change. Collectively, the Project will offer rural communities safer and more reliant travel options for both residents and businesses. Moreover, future I-87 and the US 64 are important evacuation routes for coastal communities; the Project's upgrades will ensure these roadways function optimally during weather emergencies to safely and efficiently allow eastern North Carolina residents to get out of harm's way.

The Project is a step toward realizing North Carolina's vision of resilient freight distribution corridors in eastern North Carolina. The planned future I-87 corridor traverses rural eastern North Carolina, connecting Raleigh, NC at its southern terminus and ultimately, the Hampton Roads-Norfolk region in Virginia at its northern terminus. When fully completed, this future corridor will serve as a second interstate connection between the Port of Virginia and I-95 offering multiple options for goods movement and supply chain resiliency.

Improvements along the future I-87 corridor will also maximize the \$270M investment in the Carolina Connector Intermodal Rail Terminal (CCX) by strengthening the highway connections

between CCX, the I-95 corridor, and Raleigh. The combined investment between the Future I-87 RISE Project and CCX will increase the efficiency of goods movement within the region, producing both regional and national supply chain improvements and economic benefits within our rural communities.

While the Project addresses multiple evaluation criteria for the MPDG program, improving the economic competitiveness of eastern North Carolina's rural communities along future I-87 lies at the heart of this project. This MPDG grant, when combined with significant state investment in resilience measures throughout the Project corridor, and an \$39.6 million investment by the United States Army Corps of Engineers to protect Princeville from flooding, would immediately improve safety, address key bottlenecks, and further the backbone of our freight network while simultaneously improving the resiliency of communities along a key evacuation route used during extreme weather events. The Project is a prudent investment that will increase the return on prior federal and state investments and proactively protect existing transportation assets, thereby preventing future losses.

The Edgecombe County Tourism Development Authority was established to enhance the economic impact of tourism in our community. As a public authority, the ECTDA manages the marketing of countywide tourism, in a manner that strengthens the local economy, enriches the quality of life, and preserves Edgecombe County's history and agricultural heritage.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to support the Future I-87 Resiliency, Innovation, Safety, Economy Project and the NCDOT's application for federal MPDG grant funding to accelerate its construction.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Burns

Elizabeth Burns
Executive Director of the Edgecombe Tourism Development Authority and Tarboro Edgecombe Chamber of Commerce