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Secretary Sean Duffy
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
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To Whom it May Concern:

I would like to express my strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT's) **I-95/US 301 Bridge Replacement Project** ("the Project" hereafter) application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Large Bridge FY2026 Bridge Investment Program. The Project offers an opportunity to replace seven (7) aging bridges on the vital I-95 and US 301 travel and freight corridors in Johnston County, North Carolina.

I-95 is part of the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) National Highway System (NHS), the National Highway Freight Network (NHFN), and the North Carolina Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET). US 301 is also an important part of FHWA's NHS and serves as a redundant route for I-95 in this area. The seven bridges were constructed between 1926 and 1958 and are at the end of their designed lifespan. Three of the bridges have been reconstructed between 1954 and 2009 in attempts to preserve the structures. The bridges on and over I-95 are currently in fair condition and were built in the 1950s using the materials and construction standards of the time. Maintenance costs over the past five years have continued to increase. However, without nearly constant maintenance, the condition of all the structures will continue to degrade. If this part of the I-95 corridor is closed for any reason, a substantial detour would be required, and it is likely that many travelers through the project corridor would divert to smaller, local routes that are not designed to handle high traffic volumes. This would compromise the integrity of the local routes, the safety of area residents, and cause significant impact to the movement of goods and services.

A grant award would enable the replacement of these critical infrastructure resources, providing long-term transportation resiliency while bringing the structures up to current design standards. Given the importance of the I-95 corridor to the national economy, ensuring these structures continue operation provides exceptional benefits. Furthermore, the implementation of the Project is expected to foster increased accessibility to community members and foster improved emergency response that is not burdened by detours in the event of extreme weather events. These bridge replacements are extremely important to the local community and region.

For these reasons, I, along with the Smithfield Mayor and Town Council, strongly urge you to support NCDOT's **I-95/US 301 Bridge Replacement Project** application for the Large Bridge FY2026 Bridge Investment Program funding to accelerate construction.

Respectfully,


Michael L. Scott

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