



North Carolina General Assembly
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Secretary Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, DC, 20590

Subject: Letter of Support 2022 RAISE Grant Application:
Fixing LOw Water Bridges for Emergency, Transportation, Technology, Equity, and Resilience
("FLOW BETTER") Project

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Please accept this letter of support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) *Fixing LOw Water Bridges for Emergency, Transportation, Technology, Equity, and Resilience* Project ("FLOW BETTER" or "the Project" hereafter) application for USDOT RAISE Program funds. This Project will reconstruct 28 bridges in Avery, Ashe, Alleghany, Caldwell, Watauga, and Wilkes Counties in North Carolina—including 26 low water bridges, 1 scour critical bridge, and 1 bridge with pedestrian fatalities. The reconstruction of these bridges will provide many benefits, including economic competitiveness, safety, equity, resilience, and mobility in rural western North Carolina by improving important access points in North Carolina's High Country for industry, emergency response, school bus, and transit service.

This Project supports the goals of the RAISE program to invest in multi-jurisdictional projects that achieve national objectives to create a transportation system that is the safest, most efficient, and modern in the world. The Project accomplishes the following goals:

State of Good Repair: The Project is needed to bring the bridges into a state of good repair by reconstructing them according to current NCDOT and Federal standards—14 of the Project bridges are structurally deficient, 23 meet the legacy definition of functionally obsolete, and 26 have reached the end of their useful life.

Improve Safety: The addition of improvements, notably barrier rails on 26 bridges, will reduce the likelihood of a crash by 32 percent, lowering the potential for fatalities and injuries. This will also ensure emergency services can access remote areas, particularly during emergency weather events.

Improve Environmental Sustainability: The Project will increase the resilience of at-risk infrastructure by raising each Project bridge as close to the 25-year storm elevation as its physical setting will allow, which addresses the

