

Attachment 8:
US 74 Flood Mitigation at the
Lumber River - NCDOT Letter of
Financial Commitment



**North Carolina Flood Mitigation:
PROTECTing US 74 at the Lumber River**



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

08/17/2023

J. ERIC BOYETTE
SECRETARY

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

Subject: Certification of Financial Contribution 2023 PROTECT Application:
North Carolina Flood Mitigation: PROTECTing US 74 at the Lumber River

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) respectfully seeks your favorable consideration and review of the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program Grant application titled North Carolina Flood Mitigation: PROTECTing US 74 at the Lumber River, for the strengthening of the roadway shoulder and embankment near the US 74 Lumber River Crossing.

The project includes the incorporation of either rock or a commercially available erosion control product into the existing shoulder to anchor the soil and resist shear stresses from overtopping flow, which tend to promote and propagate scour across unprotected surfaces. The shoulders at this location have failed during significant flooding events tied to hurricanes in the past. The river crossing serves as a primary access route to essential services for the surrounding communities as well as the movement of goods. Should this location need to be closed due to its loss of structural integrity from impacts from flood events, there are few viable detour options to ensure continued east/west access. The project will increase the resiliency of the river crossing, have minimal impacts to the natural environment, and ensure necessary accessibility to vital community services in the event that the river overtops.

The Lumber River, which features a large drainage area, a relatively small channel, and a wide, flat floodplain, is known for flooding local communities and overtopping crossings in strong, lower-frequency storms. The US 74 crossing between Columbus and Robeson Counties is no exception, with multiple flooding events in recent years causing considerable damage to hydraulic structures and the roadbed, necessitating costly repairs. As US 74 is the primary transportation crossing of the Lumber River in the area, with few alternatives, the flooding and resulting damage can present as major obstacles to the flow of East-West traffic. This has the potential of greatly increasing travel times along the corridor, especially for local motorists as well as the evacuation route for from the Wilmington area westward. This route is also a vital link for emergency organizations during extreme weather events, especially hurricanes and the resulting high water along the Lumber River.

In October 2016, Hurricane Matthew hit North Carolina, causing extreme rainfall and flooding throughout the entire southeastern United States. Fast moving water inundated US 74 and the Lumber River, which rose to all-time record levels. As a result, the US 74 crossing of the river was impassable for 10 days due to water overtopping the highway causing major damage to the of the roadway, washing away a portion of the highway shoulder leaving 2,525 feet of guardrail to be reset and replaced.

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Secretary Pete Buttigieg - PROTECTing US 74 at the Lumber River Project

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NCDOT is seeking \$1,803,600 in PROTECT funding, which represents 80% of the total project cost. NCDOT will fund the remaining 20% balance (\$450,900) with state funds. Award of the PROTECT funding will allow NCDOT to advance this important resiliency and accessibility project. The improvements will ensure the safety of the traveling public, allow for efficient access for rural populations, and increase regional resiliency. Thank you for your favorable consideration of this major project.

If NCDOT can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (919)707-4320 or via e-mail at mnewsome2@ncdot.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Mark T. Newsome
Chief Financial Officer