



CAMDEN

February 12, 2025

CHOWAN

The Honorable Sean Duffy  
Secretary of Transportation  
US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, DC 20590

CURRITUCK

DARE

GATES

Dear Secretary Duffy,

HYDE

PASQUOTANK

PERQUIMANS

TYRRELL

WASHINGTON

COLUMBIA

CRESWELL

DUCK

EDENTON

ELIZABETH CITY

GATESVILLE

HERTFORD

KILL DEVIL HILLS

KITTY HAWK

MANTEO

NAGS HEAD

PLYMOUTH

ROPER

SOUTHERN SHORES

WINFALL

Please accept this letter of support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) Critical Ocracoke Adaptation Strategies for Transportation Access Long-term (COASTAL, or "the Project") application to USDOT's FY 2024-2025 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation Program (PROTECT) grant program. This Project is a critical step to secure the long-term operation of vehicle ferry service between Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands, as well as NC 12 on Ocracoke Island. To achieve this goal, NCDOT is requesting PROTECT funding to complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for a new ferry facility in a streamlined manner, supported by preliminary design activities and robust interagency coordination and community engagement. These activities will build consensus and support for a long-term transportation solution that addresses the vulnerabilities and challenges threatening NCDOT's ability to provide vehicle ferry service and public access between Hatteras Island and the north end of Ocracoke Island.

According to the Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE), over 750,000 residents and visitors access Ocracoke Island by ferry annually, which is the sole means to attain off-island medical care, employment and educational opportunities, and to receive supplies and goods. However, the natural wind and wave action that shape this barrier island along with sea level rise and increasingly frequent and severe storm events is contributing to closures and damages on NC 12 during storm or high tide events and erosion at the existing South Dock ferry terminal at the north end of Ocracoke Island. The damage has led to the destruction of vehicle stacking lanes and the loss of the existing septic field for the visitor restrooms.

As the lead Transportation Planning Organization for Hyde County, the Albemarle Rural Planning Organization (ARPO) understands the unique transportation challenges faced on Ocracoke Island. Thorough planning is necessary in order to maintain safe and reliable access between Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands in the decades to come.

COASTAL will bring together Federal and State agencies, local communities, academia, and advocacy groups to build a common framework for decision-making and advance the development of a resilient, long-term solution for safe and reliable access between Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands. We strongly encourage you to favorably consider COASTAL for PROTECT funding.

Sincerely,

*Lloyd Griffin III*

Lloyd E. Griffin III, Chair  
Rural Transportation Advisory Committee  
Albemarle Rural Planning Organization