

**Board of Commissioners**

Randal Mathews, Chair  
Shannon Swindell, Vice-Chair  
Jan Moore  
Jeffrey Berry  
Thomas Midgette

# COUNTY OF HYDE

30 Oyster Creek Road  
PO Box 188  
SWAN QUARTER, NORTH CAROLINA 27885  
252-926-4400  
252-926-3701 Fax

Kris Cahoon Noble  
County Manager

Franz Holscher  
County Attorney

Richard Mann  
Clerk to the Board



October 5, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy,

On behalf of the Hyde County Board of County Commissioners, I am pleased to express our strong support for North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the National Park Service's (NPS) Adaptation for North Carolina's Critical Hatteras-Ocracoke Route (ANCHOR, or "the Project") application to USDOT's Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation Program (PROTECT) grant program. ANCHOR is a vital step to securing viable, long-term access between Ocracoke Island and Hatteras Island, and within the 70-mile Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

Ferry service from Hatteras is the Island's primary means of access, making it a lifeline for both residents and visitors. According to the Institute for Transportation Research and Education, over 750,000 residents and visitors access Ocracoke Island by ferry annually. Ferry service is not simply for convenience and recreation; it is an essential transportation link that enables access to essential services like off-island medical care while also supporting key economic needs like the movement of freight, commercial goods, and service vehicles to and from the island. However, the natural wind and wave action that shape this barrier island along with increasingly frequent and severe storm events are contributing to closures and costly repetitive damage to 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.

To address this urgent concern, NCDOT is requesting PROTECT funding to complete an alternatives analysis and a streamlined environmental review to satisfy the requirements of the

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. A resilient, long-term, multimodal solution for Ocracoke Island access is a critical milestone, and needs to be supported with the detailed analyses, interagency coordination, and public engagement necessary to advance a viable solution in this complex coastal environment. A successful project will position NCDOT and its federal, state and local partners to pursue future construction funding and quickly move toward project delivery.

The Hyde County Board of Commissioners is committed to working with our partners including but not limited to the North Carolina Department of Transportation to improve and create resilient transportation infrastructure. The ANCHOR plays a key role in giving us the tools we need to envision and create more resilient transportation infrastructure. We endorse the ANCHOR grant application and will continue to partner with the NC DOT Ferry Division in the implementation of the project to bring good things to the citizens and visitors of Ocracoke Island.

ANCHOR will bring together Federal and State agencies, local communities, academic institutions, and advocacy organizations to establish a streamlined framework for decision-making and advance a resilient, long-term solution for safe and reliable access between Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands. We strongly encourage USDOT to favorably consider ANCHOR for PROTECT funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randal Mathews", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Randal Mathews,

Chairman, Hyde County Board of Commissioners