



October 7, 2026

Diane Cox
Executive Director

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Governments**

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

I am writing on behalf of Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments in support of the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) application for a Resilience Improvement Grant through the PROTECT Competitive Grant Program to replace and realign Bridge No. 99 (Project) on Clifton Pond Road (SR 1103) over Crooked Creek in Franklin County.

Bridge No. 99 is in poor condition and currently operates under a 7-ton weight restriction that prevents fire trucks and full-sized school buses from using the crossing. During past closures, emergency responders relied on alternate routes, increasing response times in portions of the service area. A long-term closure would further disrupt access for residents and essential public services.

The existing bridge is immediately downstream of a historic masonry dam that was recently reclassified as high hazard. NCDOT's technical evaluations indicate that significant bridge repairs or replacement near the existing alignment would be constrained by vibration and dam safety risks. The proposed upstream alignment would move the bridge farther from the dam, reduce construction-related risk to the dam, and provide a more dependable transportation connection.

The proposed bridge replacement as an important investment in the region's transportation infrastructure. Reliable and safe bridges are essential to maintaining connectivity, supporting access to jobs and essential services, facilitating the movement of goods, and strengthening the overall economic vitality of our communities. Replacing aging infrastructure will improve safety and reliability while helping ensure our transportation network can meet the current and future needs of residents, businesses, and visitors throughout the region.

For these reasons, Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments strongly supports NCDOT's proposed replacement and realignment of Bridge No. 99 and urges the Federal Highway Administration to give the application favorable consideration. This investment would improve emergency access, transportation reliability, and long-term resilience for the surrounding community.

Sincerely,

Diane Cox

Digitally signed by Diane Cox
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Date: 2026.10.07 16:53:03 -0400

Diane Cox, Executive Director
Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments