

JL Powell & Company

135 E Main Street

Whiteville NC 28472

The Honorable Sean Duffy

Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.

Washington, DC 20590

Re: Madison Street Bridge Expansion Project- Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Application.

Dear Secretary Duffy:

This letter is to express the strong support of JL Powell & Company for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Madison Street Bridge Expansion project in the city of Whiteville, Columbus County, North Carolina. The project will improve the Madison Street (US701 Business) crossing over Soules Swamp by extending the existing bridge and adding a second bridge. These improvements will help the roadway to better handle heavy rainfall and flooding events, keeping this important connection open for residents, businesses, emergency responders and travelers.

Flooding is a recurring issue along Madison Street and throughout downtown Whiteville during heavy rainfall events. Improving the bridge crossing would reduce flooding in the area and allow rainwater to recede more quickly after heavy rainfall events. As a result, the project would help reduce road closures, improve access to downtown Whiteville, and provide more reliable travel for all roadway users during and after heavy rainfall events.

Why the Madison Street Bridge Expansion Matters to JL Powell & Company

JL Powell & Company owns 18 buildings in downtown Whiteville NC; many located on or near Madison Street. The project would directly benefit the 15 business owners who lease from the company and their customers, as well as 14 residents living in two of the company's buildings, our employees, and me. Recurring flooding and road closures, causes damage to property once inside the business, causes lost income, and prevents emergency responders, business owners, customers, and residents from safely entering or leaving the area. By reducing these disruptions,

the project would significantly improve access, safety, and economic stability along Madison Street and throughout Downtown Whiteville NC.

The Madison Street Bridge Expansion project represents a strategic investment in transportation resilience, mobility, public safety, and long-term vitality of downtown Whiteville and Columbus County as a region. I respectfully urge your full consideration and support for funding that will allow North Carolina DOT to advance and complete this important project, providing lasting benefits to the City of Whiteville, Columbus County, and southeastern North Carolina.

Thank you for your consideration of this meritorious grant and your commitment to our nation's critical transportation system.

Sincerely,

Owner, John S Fisher

JL Powell and Company