



TRIANGLE WEST

Transportation Planning Organization

October 07, 2026

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590-001

RE: FY24-26 PROTECT GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION BY THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE NC RESILIENT ROUTE PROJECT

Dear Secretary Duffy,

I am writing to express the Triangle West Transportation Planning Organization's support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) application regarding the NC Resilient Route Project for a Resilience Improvement Grant under the FY 2024-2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Discretionary Grant Program.

The grant funding will be used to improve the I-85 interchange with NC 86 in Orange County, North Carolina, including the replacement of the NC 86 bridge over I-85. The project is critical to the region, as the current NC 86 bridge has the lowest vertical clearance along the entire I-85 corridor in North Carolina, and it has been struck multiple times in the last decade, causing structural damage that has been expensive to repair. Further damage or closure of this bridge would cause severe disruption to the I-85 corridor for both passenger and freight travel.

The project replaces a functionally obsolete bridge at the end of service life with one that meets interstate standards and has a vertical clearance of 17.5-feet, ensuring safe and efficient travel for all types of vehicles. The project will also include ramp and roadway improvements at the I-85/NC 86 interchange to handle future traffic demand.

We believe this project as an important step in improving transportation, mobility and resilience for the western Research Triangle. The project meets transportation goals and priorities we expressed in 2055 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Triangle West requests your favorable consideration of this grant request by NCDOT for the NC Resilient Route Project.

Sincerely,

Doug Plachcinski
Executive Director