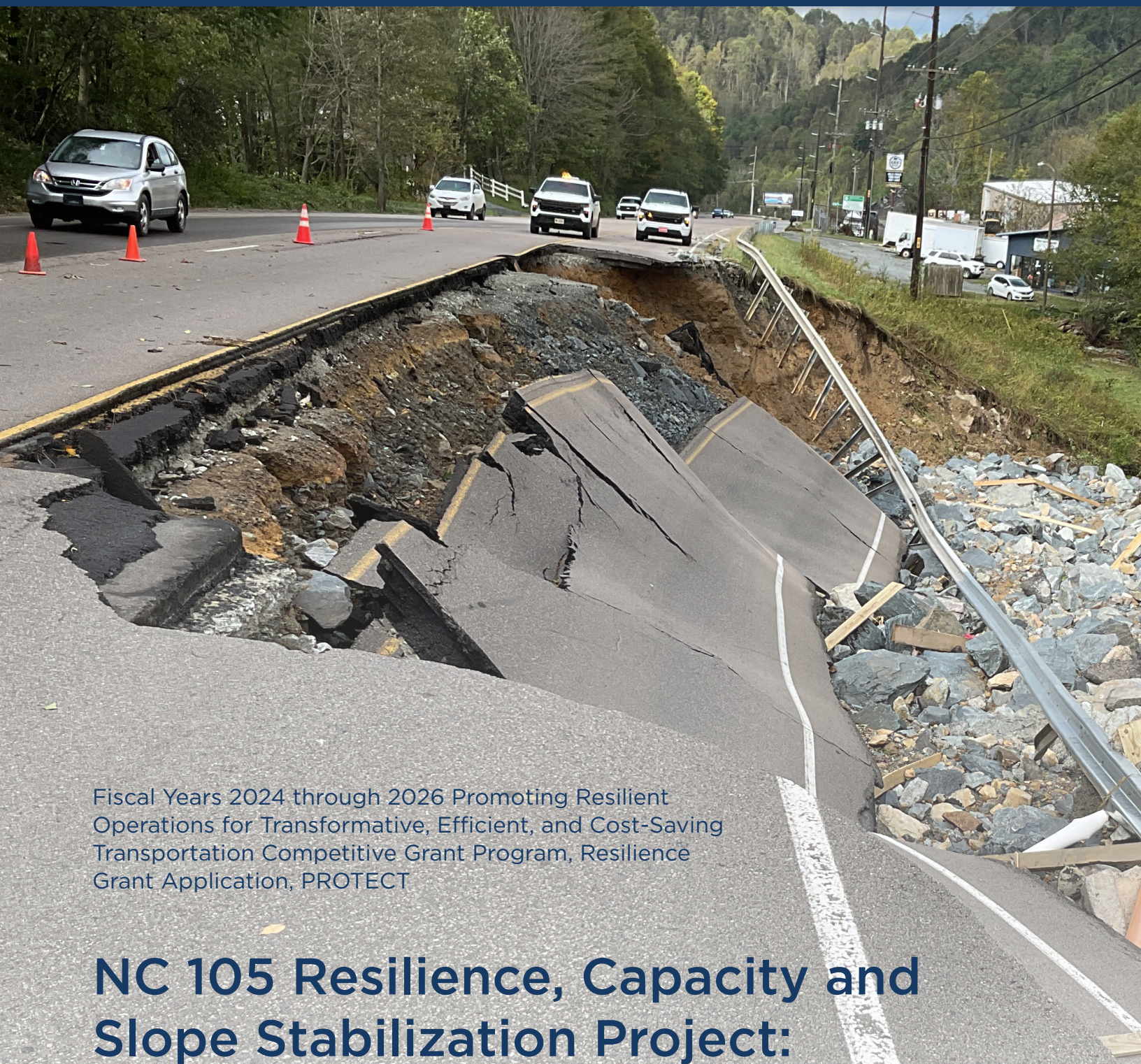


Fiscal Years 2024 through 2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation Competitive Grant Program, Resilience Grant Application, PROTECT

NC 105 Resilience, Capacity and Slope Stabilization Project: Securing a Critical Mountain Corridor

NCDOT Priority #10

Applicant:
North Carolina Department of Transportation

Letters of Support

October 9, 2026

Letters of Support

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) PROTECT Grant

NC 105 Resilience, Capacity and Slope Stabilization Project

The following letters of support for the Project were provided by:

North Carolina State and Federal Agencies

North Carolina Elected Officials

Regional and Local Stakeholders

North Carolina Economic Development Association

Economic Development Partnership of NC

High Country Rural Planning Organization

Regional Transportation Alliance

Watauga County

Watauga County School District

Appalachian State University

Maymead

North Carolina General Assembly
Senate

SENATOR RALPH HISE
47TH DISTRICT

October 8, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of Senate District 47, I am pleased to express our strong support for North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)'s **NC 105 Resilience, Capacity and Slope Stabilization Project** ("the Project"), submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY 2024-2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Program.

The Project focuses on 5.5 miles of NC 105 from Shulls Mill Road (SR 1568) to NC 105 Bypass (SR 1107) in Boone, Watauga County. This corridor faces significant challenges due to steep terrain and proximity to the Watauga River and local tributaries. The roadway serves as a vital route for emergency response, medical access, freight movement, tourism, and daily commuting, as well as a critical role in the region's mobility and economic vitality. However, it is highly vulnerable to severe weather events, including intense rainfall, flash flooding, and winter storms, which affect the existing drainage infrastructure and cause roadway inundation. This was evidenced during Hurricane Helene, which damaged drainage infrastructure along N.C. 105, including a culvert carrying Valley Creek beneath the roadway in Watauga County.

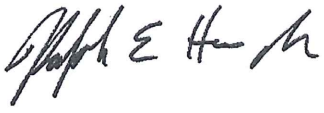
For families, residents, workers, and businesses, a more resilient N.C. 105 corridor will enhance economic benefits by minimizing detours during closures, reducing travel costs and delays, and supporting reliable access throughout the High-Country region. The Project includes roadway widening, intersection improvements, paved shoulders, and a raised median to improve traffic flow and reduce crashes, in addition to upgraded drainage infrastructure and slope-stabilization measures to address flooding, erosion, and rockslide risks.

As the senator representing nine counties in Western North Carolina, I have driven this stretch highway many times, and I can personally attest to the need for this project. The High Country is a place defined by its natural beauty, tight-knit communities, and a way of life deeply connected

to the landscape. From the winding mountain roads to the valleys shaped by the Watauga River, this region depends on safe and reliable transportation routes that allow residents to work, attend school, reach medical care, and sustain the small businesses that are the backbone of our local economy. The rugged terrain that makes our region so special also creates unique transportation challenges, and nowhere is this more evident than along the N.C. 105 corridor. Ensuring the long-term safety and resilience of this roadway is essential not only for daily travel but for preserving the vitality and accessibility of the communities that call Western North Carolina home.

Thank you for your consideration of NCDOT's PROTECT grant application, which will reduce climate-related disruptions, improve emergency access, and protect this critical route for residents, businesses, freight traffic, and visitors in Watauga County.

Sincerely,



October 6, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the North Carolina Economic Development Association and its more than one-thousand members, I am pleased to express our strong support for North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)'s **NC 105 Resilience, Capacity and Slope Stabilization Project** ("the Project"), submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY 2024-2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Program.

NCDOT's proposed Project would improve a 5.5-mile stretch of NC 105 in Boone, Watauga County, running from Shulls Mill Road (SR 1568) to the NC 105 Bypass (SR 1107). Steep mountain terrain and the nearby Watauga River and its tributaries make this a difficult corridor to maintain and protect. Because few alternate routes exist, NC 105 is essential to the region's mobility and economy: emergency responders, patients seeking medical care, freight carriers, tourists, and daily commuters all depend on it. The corridor is also home to the region's primary suppliers of aggregate, hot mix asphalt, and ready-mix concrete.

Despite its importance, the roadway is highly exposed to severe weather. Intense rainfall, flash flooding, and winter storms undermine slope stability, strain the existing drainage infrastructure, and leave the road under water. Hurricane Helene made this vulnerability clear, triggering numerous landslides along NC 105 and damaging drainage structures throughout the corridor, including the culvert that carries Valley Creek beneath the roadway in Watauga County. In the storm's immediate aftermath, reopening NC 105 was NCDOT's number one priority in its 11th Highway Division because of the critical role the route would play in recovery operations.

Although not all our members are directly affected by this Project, supporting Western North Carolina has been a formally adopted priority for the Association since the devastation from Hurricane Helene, and we are glad to see this proposal put forward. We recognize that a more resilient NC 105 will deliver economic benefits to the families, residents, workers, and businesses of the High Country by limiting detours when closures occur, lowering travel costs and delays, and preserving dependable access

across the region. That includes access to medical care and to the construction materials needed for recovery after a natural disaster.

To improve traffic flow and reduce crashes, the Project will widen the roadway, improve intersections, add paved shoulders, and install a raised median. It will also upgrade drainage infrastructure and stabilize slopes to reduce the risks of flooding, erosion, and rockslides.

We appreciate your consideration of NCDOT's PROTECT grant application. This investment will reduce climate-related disruptions, strengthen emergency access, and safeguard a critical route for the residents, businesses, freight traffic, and visitors of Watauga County.

Sincerely,



André Lennon
2026-27 President, North Carolina Economic Development Association

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP of NORTH CAROLINA

October 5, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC), I am pleased to express our strong support for North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)'s **NC 105 Resilience, Capacity and Slope Stabilization Project (**"the Project"), submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY 2024-2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Program.

The Project focuses on 5.5 miles of NC 105 from Shulls Mill Road (SR 1568) to NC 105 Bypass (State Route 1107) in Boone, Watauga County. This corridor faces significant challenges due to steep terrain and proximity to the Watauga River and local tributaries. The roadway serves as a vital route for emergency response, medical access, freight movement, tourism, and daily commuting, as well as a critical role in the region's mobility and economic vitality as redundant routes of travel are limited. In addition, the region's primary suppliers of aggregate, hot mix asphalt, and ready-mix concrete are located within this corridor.

However, it is highly vulnerable to severe weather events, including intense rainfall, flash flooding, and winter storms, which impact slope stability and affect the existing drainage infrastructure and cause roadway inundation. This was evidenced during Hurricane Helene, which resulted in numerous landslides along NC 105 and damaged drainage infrastructure along the corridor, including a culvert carrying Valley Creek beneath the roadway in Watauga County. Immediately after the storm, the NC 105 corridor was the top priority for NCDOT to reopen in the Department's 11th Highway Division due to the critical role this roadway would go on to play during recovery operations.

Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina
150 Fayetteville Street | Suite 900 | Raleigh NC 27601
Christopher.Chung@EDPNC.com | 919 447 7788 O | 919 724 7943 C

For families, residents, workers, and businesses, a more resilient NC 105 corridor will enhance economic benefits by minimizing detours during closures, reducing travel costs and delays, and supporting reliable access throughout the High-Country region, including medical access and access to construction materials during natural disaster recovery operations. The Project includes roadway widening, intersection improvements, paved shoulders, and a raised median to improve traffic flow and reduce crashes, in addition to upgraded drainage infrastructure and slope-stabilization measures to address flooding, erosion, and rockslide risks.

The EDPNC is tasked with economic development functions on the state's behalf – including business recruitment and foreign direct investment attraction, existing industry expansion, international trade and export assistance, and tourism promotion. Our efforts benefit greatly from increased transportation connectivity and capacity, not to mention improved resiliency in our physical infrastructure. The requested funding would aid significantly in bolstering the region and state's competitiveness for both corporate investment and travel visitation.

Thank you for your consideration of NCDOT's PROTECT grant application, which will reduce climate-related disruptions, improve emergency access, and protect this critical route for residents, businesses, freight traffic, and visitors in Watauga County.

Sincerely,



Christopher Chung
Chief Executive Officer

Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina
150 Fayetteville Street | Suite 900 | Raleigh NC 27601
Christopher.Chung@EDPNC.com | 919 447 7788 O | 919 724 7943 C

High Country Rural Planning Organization (RPO)
Municipalities and Counties of
Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey

"Serving North Carolina's High Country with Continuing, Cooperative, and Comprehensive Transportation Planning"

Brenda Lyerly, RTAC Chair David Graham, Transportation Planner Jose Butron, RTCC Chair

October 5, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the High Country Rural Planning Organization, I am pleased to express our strong support for North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)'s **NC 105 Resilience, Capacity and Slope Stabilization Project** ("the Project"), submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY 2024-2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Program.

The Project focuses on 5.5 miles of NC 105 from Shulls Mill Road (SR 1568) to NC 105 Bypass (SR 1107) in Boone, Watauga County. This corridor faces significant challenges due to steep terrain and proximity to the Watauga River and local tributaries. The roadway serves as a vital route for emergency response, medical access, freight movement, tourism, and daily commuting, as well as a critical role in the region's mobility and economic vitality as redundant routes of travel are limited. In addition, the region's primary suppliers of aggregate, hot mix asphalt, and ready mix concrete are located within this corridor. However, it is highly vulnerable to severe weather events, including intense rainfall, flash flooding, and winter storms, which impact slope stability and affect the existing drainage infrastructure and cause roadway inundation. This was evidenced during Hurricane Helene, which resulted in numerous landslides along NC 105 and damaged drainage infrastructure along the corridor, including a culvert carrying Valley Creek beneath the roadway in Watauga County. Immediately after the storm, the NC 105 corridor was the #1 priority for NCDOT to reopen in the Department's 11th Highway Division due to the critical role this roadway would go on to play during recovery operations.

For families, residents, workers, and businesses, a more resilient N.C. 105 corridor will enhance economic benefits by minimizing detours during closures, reducing travel costs and delays, and supporting reliable access throughout the High-Country region, including medical access and access to construction materials during natural disaster recovery operations. The Project includes roadway widening, intersection improvements, paved shoulders, and a raised median to improve traffic flow and reduce crashes, in addition to upgraded drainage infrastructure and slope-stabilization measures to address flooding, erosion, and rockslide risks.

468 New Market Blvd, Boone, NC 28607 * Phone – (828) 265-5434 * Fax – 828-265-5439 * E-mail-dgraham@hccog.org

Thank you for your consideration of NCDOT's PROTECT grant application, which will reduce climate-related disruptions, improve emergency access, and protect this critical route for residents, businesses, freight traffic, and visitors in Watauga County.

If I can provide additional information in support of the NCDOT's PROTECT grant application, please feel free to contact me at dgraham@hccog.org or by phone at (828) 265-5434 ext. 135.

Sincerely,

David Graham

David Graham
Transportation Planner
High Country Rural Planning Organization

October 7, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

The Regional Transportation Alliance, the voice of the regional business community in North Carolina's metropolitan Triangle area, applauds and supports the efforts of NCDOT as they continue their recovery efforts from Hurricane Helene that are improving travel and accessibility to and within western N.C.

We believe that NCDOT's application under the USDOT FY2024-26 PROTECT grant program will advance essential transportation resiliency by improving emergency access and protecting a vital roadway corridor for residents, businesses, freight traffic, as well as for tourists and visitors to our friends in northwestern North Carolina.

RTA thanks you for your consideration of NCDOT's PROTECT grant application. Given the destruction of Hurricane Helene and the associated damage to transportation, the need for resilient and improved mobility infrastructure in western N.C. is clear, and this USDOT grant program would successfully leverage and enhance NCDOT's recovery efforts.

Thank you for your consideration of this funding request. Please contact me at 919.664.7065 or joe@letsgetmoving.org with questions.

Sincerely,



Joe Milazzo II, PE
Executive Director,
Regional Transportation Alliance

WATAUGA COUNTY

OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY MANAGER

Administration Building, Suite 205 – 814 West King Street – Boone, NC 28607 – (828) 265-8000
TDD 1-800-735-2962 – Voice 1-800-735-8262 – FAX (828) 264-3230

October 8, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of Watauga County, I am pleased to express our strong support for North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)'s **NC 105 Resilience, Capacity and Slope Stabilization Project** ("the Project"), submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY 2024-2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Program.

The Project focuses on 5.5 miles of NC 105 from Shulls Mill Road (SR 1568) to NC 105 Bypass (SR 1107) in Boone, Watauga County. This corridor faces significant challenges due to steep terrain and proximity to the Watauga River and local tributaries. The roadway serves as a vital route for emergency response, medical access, freight movement, tourism, and daily commuting, as well as a critical role in the region's mobility and economic vitality as redundant routes of travel are limited. In addition, the region's primary suppliers of aggregate, hot mix asphalt, and ready-mix concrete are located within this corridor. However, it is highly vulnerable to severe weather events, including intense rainfall, flash flooding, and winter storms, which impact slope stability and affect the existing drainage infrastructure and cause roadway inundation. This was evidenced during Hurricane Helene, which resulted in numerous landslides along NC 105 and damaged drainage infrastructure along the corridor, including a culvert carrying Valley Creek beneath the roadway in Watauga County. Immediately after the storm, the NC 105 corridor was the #1 priority for NCDOT to reopen in the Department's 11th Highway Division due to the critical role this roadway would go on to play during recovery operations.

For families, residents, workers, and businesses, a more resilient N.C. 105 corridor will enhance economic benefits by minimizing detours during closures, reducing travel costs and delays, and supporting reliable access throughout the High-Country region, including medical access and access to construction materials during natural disaster recovery operations. The Project includes roadway widening, intersection improvements, paved shoulders, and a raised median to improve traffic flow and reduce crashes, in addition to upgraded drainage infrastructure and slope-stabilization measures to address flooding, erosion, and rockslide risks.

Thank you for your consideration of NCDOT's PROTECT grant application, which will reduce climate-related disruptions, improve emergency access, and protect this critical route for residents, businesses, freight traffic, and visitors in Watauga County.

Sincerely,

Deron T. Geouque
County Manager

WATAUGA COUNTY SCHOOLS

WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Margaret E. Gragg Education Center
175 Pioneer Trail Boone, NC 28607
(828) 264-7190

October 7, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of Watauga County Schools, I am pleased to express our strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) **NC 105 Resilience, Capacity and Slope Stabilization Project**, submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY 2024–2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Program.

NC 105 is an essential transportation corridor for Watauga County Schools, providing a critical connection for students, families, teachers, staff, school buses, and other school-related transportation. It also serves as an important route for emergency services and access to medical care. Because there are limited alternate routes in our region, disruptions along NC 105 can significantly affect school bus routes, employee commutes, family access to schools, deliveries, and emergency response.

The proposed Project would provide meaningful long-term benefits by improving the safety, reliability, and resilience of this critical corridor. Upgraded drainage infrastructure and slope-stabilization measures would help reduce the risk of flooding, erosion, landslides, and other weather-related disruptions, while roadway widening, intersection improvements, paved shoulders, and a raised median would improve traffic flow and safety. These improvements will strengthen our ability to maintain access to schools, continue serving students and families, and respond effectively during future severe weather events and other emergencies.

Watauga County Schools strongly supports this Project and believes the proposed improvements will provide lasting benefits to our students, families, employees, and the broader Watauga County community. Thank you for your consideration of this important investment in the safety, resilience, and future of our region.

Sincerely,

Leslie Alexander

Dr. Leslie Alexander
Superintendent

Appalachian
STATE UNIVERSITY

Division of University Operations
BB Dougherty Administration Bldg.
PO Box 32003
438 Academy St., Suite 327
Boone, NC 28608
Phone: (828) 262-6830

October 6, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of Appalachian State University, I am pleased to express our strong support for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) NC 105 Resilience, Capacity and Slope Stabilization Project ("the Project"), submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY 2024-2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Program.

The Project focuses on 5.5 miles of NC 105 from Shulls Mill Road (SR 1568) to NC 105 Bypass (SR 1107) in Boone, Watauga County. This corridor faces significant challenges due to steep terrain and proximity to the Watauga River and local tributaries. The roadway serves as a vital route for emergency response, medical access, freight movement, tourism, and daily commuting, as well as a critical role in the region's mobility and economic vitality. However, it is highly vulnerable to severe weather events, including intense rainfall, flash flooding, and winter storms, which affect the existing drainage infrastructure and cause roadway inundation. This was evidenced during Hurricane Helene, which damaged drainage infrastructure along N.C. 105, including a culvert carrying Valley Creek beneath the roadway in Watauga County.

For families, residents, workers, and businesses, a more resilient N.C. 105 corridor will enhance economic benefits by minimizing detours during closures, reducing travel costs and delays, and supporting reliable access throughout the High Country region. The Project includes roadway widening, intersection improvements, paved shoulders, and a raised median to improve traffic flow and reduce crashes, in addition to upgraded drainage infrastructure and slope-stabilization measures to address flooding, erosion, and rockslide risks.

As an institution serving over 21,000 students along with thousands of faculty and staff, Appalachian State University relies heavily on the NC 105 corridor for daily operations, campus transit, emergency management, and student safety. NC 105 acts as a primary artery connecting our main campus, university housing, and regional facilities to the broader High Country community. Infrastructure disruptions along this corridor directly impact academic

continuity, campus emergency response times, and the safe transit of our commuting students and staff. Upgrading and stabilizing this vital thoroughfare is essential to safeguarding our university population and ensuring uninterrupted operations during severe weather events.

Thank you for your consideration of NCDOT's PROTECT grant application, which will reduce climate-related disruptions, improve emergency access, and protect this critical route for residents, businesses, freight traffic, and visitors in Watauga County.

Sincerely,



J.J. Brown
Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer
Appalachian State University

AGGREGATES • AGRICULTURE • ASPHALT
PO Box 911, Mountain City, TN 37683

October 5, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of Maymead, Incorporated, I am pleased to express our strong support for North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)'s NC 105 Resilience, Capacity and Slope Stabilization Project ("the Project"), submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY 2024-2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Program.

The Project focuses on 5.5 miles of NC 105 from Shulls Mill Road (SR 1568) to NC 105 Bypass (SR 1107) in Boone, Watauga County. This corridor faces significant challenges due to steep terrain and proximity to the Watauga River and local tributaries. The roadway serves as a vital route for emergency response, medical access, freight movement, tourism, and daily commuting, as well as a critical role in the region's mobility and economic vitality as redundant routes of travel are limited. In addition, the region's primary suppliers of aggregate, hot mix asphalt, and ready mix concrete are located within this corridor. However, it is highly vulnerable to severe weather events, including intense rainfall, flash flooding, and winter storms, which impact slope stability and affect the existing drainage infrastructure and cause roadway inundation. This was evidenced during Hurricane Helene, which resulted in numerous landslides along NC 105 and damaged drainage infrastructure along the corridor, including a culvert carrying Valley Creek beneath the roadway in Watauga County. Immediately after the storm, the NC 105 corridor was the #1 priority for NCDOT to reopen in the Department's 11th Highway Division due to the critical role this roadway would go on to play during recovery operations.

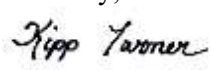
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Maymead is a family owned company serving western North Carolina, southwest Virginia, and east Tennesse through its materials production, three concrete ready mix facitities, highway construction operations, asphalt recycling, and seventeen asphalt plant locations. We operate in a considerably large area in western North Carolina and were able to provide essential services in response to Hurricane Helene in 2024. Maymead understands the importance of our facilities along the corridor of the subject NC 105 project and in fact owns and operates one of our asphalt plants directly adjacent to the widening project. Our owners, Mr. Wiley Roark and the Roark family strongly support this project.

Thank you for your consideration of NCDOT's PROTECT grant application, which will reduce climate-related disruptions, improve emergency access, and protect this critical route for residents, businesses, freight traffic, and visitors in Watauga County.

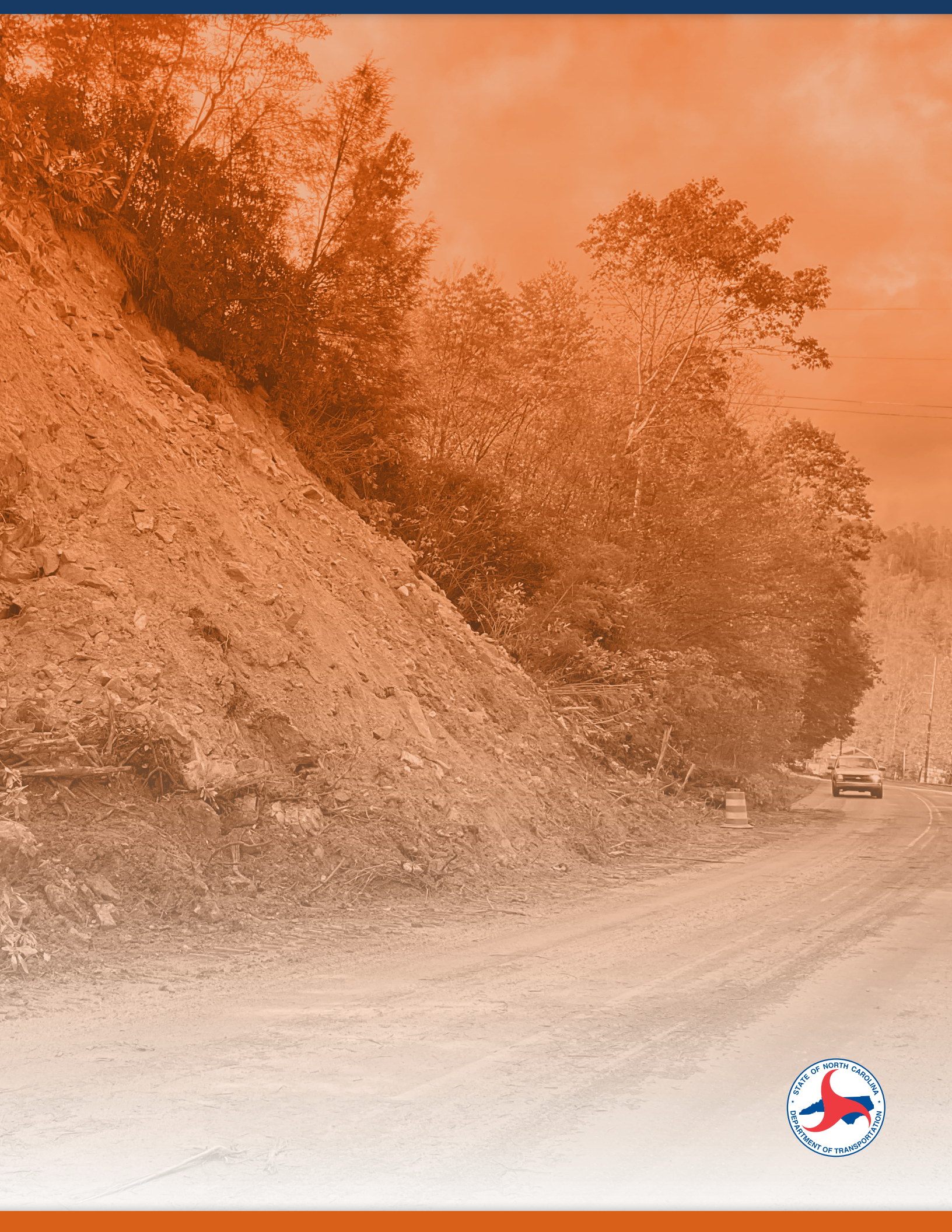
If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at (828) 320-3336 or via email at kturner@maymead.com.

Sincerely,



Kipp Turner, PE
VP-Construction

CC:
Mr. Wiley Roark, Owner, Maymead Inc.


STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION