WATAUGA COUNTY SCHOOLS

WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Margaret E. Gragg Education Center
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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