

CORE SOUND WATERFOWL MUSEUM & HERITAGE CENTER
A Place for the People



September 28, 2026

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

Re: Letter of Support – North Carolina Department of Transportation – **FY2024—FY2026 USDOT PROTECT Application**

Dear Secretary Duffy,

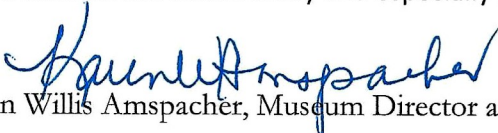
The Core Sound Waterfowl Museum & Heritage Center and its community outreach network, **DERN – Down East Resilience Network**, is writing to express the immediate everyday needs of our low-lying communities that would greatly benefit from the work outlined in the above reference project grant. Our communities (13 unincorporated villages located along Core Sound in Carteret County, NC) are already living with the impacts of sea level rise including crumbling culverts, flooded roads that hinder transportation to and from work, treacherous bus routes for our children, and the constant uncertainty of access to the most remote areas of our communities, often where older residents still maintain homesteads.

DERN's partners are working to address these issues through research, network collaboration and local engagement and education. Their work locally is providing online resources (small scale) to road closures and rising waters. These social media tools are already becoming part of local residents' planning for daily transportation to and from our inland small towns for work, groceries and doctor appointments.

From this Network a local initiative for storm preparation and response based on road washouts is underway with the support of local emergency agencies, but the challenges exceed our shared capacity to prepare for what is ahead. Public awareness of the current resilience issues is growing due to our local efforts, but we do not have the tools or the expertise to address any of these challenges.

This PROTECT proposal, Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation Program, would enable communities like ours to respond as a region in a sustainable way. Public safety, economic infrastructure, access to work and schools, are all current issues that will require more than local community members can provide. Planning, preparedness and implementation will require community members, local government and statewide agencies to address the growing risks coastal NC is seeing almost daily.

We sincerely hope you will support this NCDOT proposal to address our needs today and especially for the realistic livability challenges going forward.


Karen Willis Amspacher, Museum Director and DERN Coordinator

"At the End of Road"
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