

September 18, 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 State Climate Office of North Carolina is pleased to support the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) application for the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program. Funding will improve and expand nationally recognized transportation-focused flood-resilience and -response tools that together allow for NCDOT, federal, state, local agencies, and the traveling public to more proactively prepare for, respond to, and recover from statewide flood threats. The application is titled **North Carolina Sustainable solutions for Transforming flooding prediction to build Resilient infrastructure and Optimized operations through Next-generation tools and Groundbreaking innovation, or NC STRONG** for short.

These systems are essential for providing public safety and economic continuity during flood events. Together, they help determine and anticipate flood and storm surge impacts and identify critical assets at risk. By connecting hazard information before, during, and after hazardous events, the framework informs emergency routing, inspection priorities, critical-corridor identification, and coordination among state and local agencies, emergency responders, businesses, and communities. Through this grant, NCDOT's suite of flood warning tools will strengthen North Carolina's ability to anticipate disruptions, reduce community isolation, maintain access to critical services and economic centers, prioritize resilient investments, and accelerate post-disaster recovery. In particular, the State Climate Office of North Carolina works closely NCDOT on issues related to rainfall extremes, including rainfall tools that support both operations and resilience.

The State Climate Office of North Carolina strongly supports this application and respectfully encourages the Federal Highway Administration to fund the framework's progression that protects public safety, maintains critical access, reduces isolation, bolsters economic continuity, and improves resilient investment decisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jared H. Bowden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jared" being more prominent.

Jared H. Bowden, PhD.
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