

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 29, 2026

The Honorable Sean P. Duffy
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Secretary Duffy:

We are pleased to support the application of Dorchester County, Maryland for funding consideration through the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY 2024 through FY 2026 Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Program. This critical funding will enable the county to develop a comprehensive Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan (TRIP) to address chronic infrastructure vulnerabilities in its highly susceptible southern region.

Southern Dorchester County is on the front lines of extreme weather and tidal changes on the East Coast. Because the entire project area lies within a mapped floodplain, its roadways face regular, disruptive inundation from high tides, severe storm events, hurricanes, and coastal flooding. These roads are the single points of access for rural communities, agricultural commerce, and essential emergency response vehicles.

Critically, this vulnerable transportation network directly encompasses and supports major federal investments. The project area includes the globally recognized Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and key cultural landmarks honoring an American hero, including the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park and Museum. Flooding in this region does not just isolate residents; it actively threatens public access to, and the long-term viability of, these vital federal ecological and historical assets.

The development of a TRIP is a powerful, proactive mechanism for Dorchester County. By meticulously assessing current and changing environmental conditions—such as sea level rise and increased storm severity—TRIP will serve as a building block to prioritize future resilience improvements. It will provide the necessary economic and structural justification for targeted capital investments, ensuring that federal and local resources are deployed where they will most effectively improve safety, maintain emergency access, and lessen the long-term impacts of natural disasters.

A resilient transportation network is vital to protecting Maryland's citizens, supporting our local economies, and safeguarding our shared national treasures. We urge you to give Dorchester County's application full and favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Van Hollen", written over a horizontal line.

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Angela D. Alsobrooks", written over a horizontal line.

Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andy Harris, M.D.", written over a horizontal line.

Andy Harris, M.D.
Member of Congress



DORCHESTER COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

Dedicated to Service

P.O. Box 942 • Cambridge, Maryland 21613

September 14, 2026

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

Re: Support for Dorchester County's PROTECT Planning Grant

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the Dorchester County Volunteer Firefighters Association, representing 14 volunteer fire companies, I express our strong support for Dorchester County's FY 2024–2026 PROTECT Planning Grant application to develop a Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan (TRIP) for the connecting roads in southern Dorchester County.

Our members face flooded roads while responding to emergencies in these communities. The project area lies within a mapped floodplain, where high tides, severe storms, and chronic flooding threaten reliable access. For residents experiencing a fire, medical emergency, or serious injury, roadway conditions can determine how quickly help arrives.

Flooding can force detours, delay fire and emergency medical response, and make roads impassable to standard emergency vehicles. Submerged pavement can also conceal washouts and other hazards, placing responders and equipment at risk. These conditions complicate evacuations and can isolate residents when emergency services are needed most.

The proposed TRIP will assess roadway vulnerabilities under current and future conditions, including sea level rise, and recommend measures to improve resilience. Identifying vulnerable road segments and prioritizing improvements will provide a stronger basis for future federal and state investments. This planning is an essential step toward safer emergency access and more dependable evacuation routes.

Reliable roads also sustain small businesses and the county's historic seafood industry and provide access to Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. We appreciate the county's attention to these community needs alongside emergency response. We respectfully urge the Department to fund this planning grant to help protect residents, visitors, and the first responders who serve them.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Adam Tolley, written in a cursive style.

Adam Tolley
President, Dorchester County Volunteer Firefighters Association