



BIG RIVER

PARK CONSERVANCY

August 11, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: FY2023 USDOT PROTECT Grant Application - City of West Memphis, Arkansas

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of Big River Park Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited, we are writing to commit our financial support for the City of West Memphis, Arkansas in their FY 2023 U.S. Department of Transportation's Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) grant application to fund the Mississippi River Bridges: Resilience of Multimodal Infrastructure through Floodplain Restoration and Protection project.

The total PROTECT project cost is \$20,194,437.25 – with a funding request of \$16,155,549.80 – to help provide increased resiliency to vital local, regional and national transportation assets. This is an opportunity to create a special place for wetlands restoration while establishing a protected land that offers a complete network of trails and amenities that highlights restored natural features for Memphis, West Memphis, and surrounding communities.

Ducks Unlimited and Big River Park Conservancy have a history of commitment to this area and its community. Should the U.S. DOT select this application for grant funding, Ducks Unlimited and Big River Park Conservancy are committed to supporting the project through a 20% local match, equaling \$4,038,887.45.

This wetland restoration and reforestation effort will help to remedy the continued degradation of the floodplain due to the extreme Mississippi River flooding. In addition, the new hardwood forests will strengthen the floodplain and will reduce wave action and scour on the earthen embankments that support two major interstate crossings (I-40 and I-55), the Big River Crossing pedestrian bridge, the Levee Trail, Meadow Trail and two class V railroad crossings. These transportation systems converge in the Mississippi River floodplain in the State of Arkansas and are essential to the local, regional and national economy.

Thank you for your consideration in the 2023 PROTECT Grant Program funding to restore these wetlands and crossings that are critical to communities both locally and nationwide.

Sincerely,



Dow McVean, President
Big River Park Conservancy



President
Chuck Smith
Memphis, Tennessee

Chairman of the Board
Doug Schoenrock
Huntsville, Alabama

Chief Executive Officer
Adam H. Putnam
Memphis, Tennessee

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The total PROTECT project cost is \$20,194,000 – with a funding request of \$16,155,550– to help provide increased resiliency to vital local, regional, and national transportation assets. This is an opportunity to protected transportation infrastructure through wetlands and forest restoration while establishing a protected park that offers a complete network of trails and nature-based amenities that highlights restored natural features for Memphis, West Memphis, and surrounding communities.

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Sincerely,

Darin R. Blunck
Chief Financial Officer
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.