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UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 9, 2022

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SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP

Mr. Mohsin Syed
Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Mississippi River Parkway Commission's joint grant application submitted to FHA
Funding Opportunity #: **693JJ322NF00008** (FY22 Nat'l Scenic Byways Program)
CFDA #: 20.205—Highway Planning and Construction

Dear Assistant Secretary Syed:

I write in support of a joint grant application submitted by the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission and the State of Arkansas Department of Transportation to the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) for a federal grant to develop a new online presence for the ten-state Great River Road project. Funding support from FHA/USDOT will allow the grantees and stakeholders to fully implement the outcomes of this vital project by bringing the stories of the Great River Road to a larger audience. The Great River Road exemplifies the National Scenic Byway intrinsic qualities - archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic. The ten Mississippi River states all offer unique and exceptional river experiences.

The Mississippi River is a national and international treasure and attraction. In Minnesota, the Great River Road (an All-American Road) spans 565 miles, 20 counties, 43 communities; and three tribal nations. The Great River Road is a popular travel destination and key driver of the economy in the communities along the river. In Minnesota, Mississippi River counties accounted for over \$8.3 billion in leisure and hospitality industry gross sales and an estimated 140,930 leisure and hospitality jobs in 2020 (2022 Tourism and the Economy Fact Sheet, Explore Minnesota Tourism). These numbers show strong interest in Mississippi River areas even during a time when the Covid-19 pandemic was heavily impacting travel.

I support the goals and objectives of this joint grant application and the legislative intent of the FY22 National Scenic Byways Program. Thank you for your full consideration of my support and their funding request.

If you have any further questions regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Chao R. Lee on my staff in the St. Paul office via email: chao.lee@mail.house.gov or by phone (651) 224-9191.

Sincerely,

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

BM: CL