

H. MORGAN GRIFFITH

9TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEES:

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
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April 27, 2021

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

I am requesting funding for a preliminary engineering project titled "Coalfields Expressway - RTE 121 West Virginia State Line to Grundy, Virginia" in this year's surface transportation reauthorization legislation.

The project sponsor is the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority and the project is located in Buchanan County along planned U.S. Route 121, the Coalfields Expressway, from Grundy, Virginia to the West Virginia state line.


The funding is designated to conduct pre-engineering work on a targeted portion of U.S. Route 121, the Coalfields Expressway. Funds will be used for location analysis and engineering to assist with the planning, budgeting, and design of the Elkins and Rockhouse sections of the proposed highway (approximately 16.47 miles) which run from Grundy, Virginia to the West Virginia state line. The project will define survey alignment data as well as evaluate needed environmental work. This information will then be used to develop a more comprehensive construction planning level estimate for these two segments. This pre-engineering project is needed in order to better plan and budget for the construction of these sections, which are critical to the overall U.S. Route 121 project.

The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars and is anticipated to have the benefit of providing a much needed and more efficient pathway through the coalfields region of Southwest Virginia and Southern West Virginia. By providing safe and rapid access to communities along the corridor, it will greatly improve interstate commerce between disadvantaged portions of Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky.

As an area that has been ravaged by economic depression with the exit of much of the coal industry, Southwest Virginia stands to benefit greatly from increased connectivity with our surrounding states. The current roadways that serve the communities and would benefit from this project are primarily rural roads, which are not as safe, well maintained, or easy to navigate. Not only do these challenges make passage for local residents difficult, but they also mean that businesses and through-traffic avoid the region. The coalfield's economic development boards struggle to get businesses to consider the area because of the lack of connectivity to other regions and major highways.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Morgan Griffith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "H" and a long, sweeping tail.

H. Morgan Griffith
Member of Congress