



March 25, 2024

The Honorable Michael S. Regan
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Subject: Letter of Support for the City of Jacksonville's (COJ) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Application - Northeast Florida's Electric Vehicle Overhaul and Low-Emission Transit (E-VOLT) Project

Dear Grant Review Committee,

Groundwork Jacksonville is writing to express our unanimous and enthusiastic support for the Northeast Florida Electric Vehicle Overhaul and Low-Emission Transit (E-VOLT) project, spearheaded by the City of Jacksonville. This initiative represents a significant leap forward in our collective effort to mitigate climate change, enhance our regional transportation systems, and promote sustainable economic growth.

GWJax is the City of Jacksonville's nonprofit partner established to clean and redevelop Hogans and McCoys creeks and build the Emerald Trail, a 34-mile network of trails, greenways and parks that will encircle the urban core and connect 14 historic neighborhoods to downtown, the creeks, and the St. Johns River. Our work engaging neighborhood residents, stakeholders, business leaders and funders in the planning and construction of the Trail makes us acutely aware of the environmental, socio-economic, and mobility challenges facing disadvantaged communities.

A 2019 greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory revealed that transportation accounts for 39% of the region's GHG emissions. Addressing this issue is not only critical for our environment but also for the health and well-being of our residents.

The E-VOLT project is designed to tackle these challenges head-on by expanding mobility hubs, developing bike and pedestrian paths, and transitioning to electric vehicles (EVs) across our school districts, municipal fleets, and public transportation systems. This initiative will not only reduce our GHG emissions but also enhance the quality of life for our residents by improving air quality and reducing noise pollution.

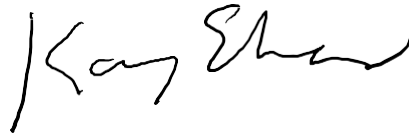
Moreover, the E-VOLT project will have profound economic and social benefits. By investing in EV infrastructure, such as charging stations and maintenance facilities, we will spur local job creation and provide new opportunities for our workforce. This transition to cleaner transportation options is also expected to lower operational costs in the long term, providing fiscal savings that can be redirected to other critical community services.

Importantly, we recognize that the transition to a more sustainable transportation system must be inclusive. The E-VOLT project prioritizes the needs of low-income and disadvantaged communities by ensuring they have access to improved public transportation options and the associated health and economic benefits. By reducing barriers to mobility, we can enhance social equity and provide a ladder of opportunity for all residents.

The support for the E-VOLT project underscores our shared commitment to a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable future. We believe that this initiative aligns with the goals of the EPA's CPRG Phase 2 Implementation Grant and represents a worthy investment in the future of Northeast Florida and the nation.

We urge the EPA to consider the Northeast Florida E-VOLT project favorably and provide the necessary funding to bring this vision to life. Together, we can set a precedent for regional collaboration, innovation, and resilience in the face of environmental challenges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kay Ehas", with a stylized, cursive script.

Kay Ehas
Chief Executive Officer

