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March 22, 2024

Metroplan  
Attn: Casey Covington, Executive Director  
501 W. Markham St., Ste. B  
Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: Letter of Commitment for Arkansas Tri-Region Coalition's CPRG application

Dear Mr. Covington:

This letter is intended to express Audubon Delta's strong, long-term commitment to supporting the carbon sequestration and preservation goals outlined in the Arkansas Tri-Region Coalition's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) implementation application.

Audubon Delta is a regional office of the National Audubon Society operating in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. In Arkansas, Audubon Delta offices are located at the Little Rock Audubon Center. The National Audubon Society protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow. By using birds as a lens through which to envision a more sustainable future for all wildlife and human communities, Audubon implements a hemispheric and science-based approach to conservation. A hemispheric approach directs our work to the places where birds need us the most including urban and suburban spaces. It recognizes that the majority of bird species in the Americas migrate annually between Canada, the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Audubon in Arkansas emphasizes the importance that the state's landscapes play in a bird's life cycle. Arkansas and its unique habitats are a valuable piece to the hemispheric, data-driven approach Audubon uses to inform conservation action. The central Arkansas region is at a confluence of several of Arkansas's ecoregions and home to the state's largest metropolitan area. Since the year 2000, Audubon in Arkansas has protected, managed, and restored natural spaces through best management practices, engaged diverse stakeholders in clean energy and climate policy advocacy, and trained landowners and volunteers to maintain and manage public and private land.

In partnership with Metroplan, Audubon Delta will work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through habitat management and improvement. Together, we will work to improve air quality, and provide energy and transportation cost savings by actively supporting efforts to protect critical natural infrastructure cores and corridors from development or degradation. We intend to partner with Metroplan in restoration activities and adding mechanisms of carbon-sequestration through nature-based solutions e.g., better forest and green space management utilizing native vegetation in these areas. To build workforce and capacity, we intend to collaborate with local communities, and train local municipal staff to create and maintain natural spaces and use of native plant species for maximum long-term carbon sequestration. These efforts align with Audubon's current and future priorities in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Arkansas, known as the Natural State, faces critical environmental challenges. Air quality is a pressing concern, with pollutants impacting public health and exacerbating respiratory conditions. By curbing greenhouse gas emissions, we can mitigate these adverse effects. Moreover, Arkansas boasts abundant environmental assets, including pristine forests, waterways, and diverse ecosystems. Protecting these natural treasures ensures a sustainable future for generations to come.

For greatest impact however, our efforts must extend beyond just environmental conservation. Low-income and disadvantaged communities often bear the brunt of pollution. These vulnerable populations deserve equitable access to clean air, safe water, and green spaces. By prioritizing emission reduction, we strengthen these communities and promote environmental justice as we confront a severe climate change.

Lastly, the environmental sector offers immense potential for high-quality jobs. Investing in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and conservation initiatives creates employment opportunities while safeguarding our planet. We recognize that reducing greenhouse gas emissions isn't just an environmental goal—it's a commitment to the well-being of Arkansans and the resilience of our state.

I appreciate your dedication to implementing greenhouse gas reduction projects across Arkansas' three largest metro areas. We are eager to participate in the coalition's efforts to protect the Natural State and ensure environmental and economic benefits to over one half of Arkansas' population, including some of the state's most vulnerable residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. Brian Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "F." and last name "Moore" clearly distinguishable.

F. Brian Moore  
Interim VP/Executive Director  
Audubon Delta