

Frontier Metropolitan Planning Organization

Your way of taking an active part in the future
of your region's transportation framework

March 19, 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:

Frontier Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) remains strongly committed to supporting the immediate and long-term goals outlined in the Arkansas Tri-Region Coalition's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) implementation application. Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), which are mandated by Congress to carry out the transportation planning process in metropolitan areas, play a key role in implementing activities to reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, including on-road emissions.

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; and especially harms our vulnerable and diverse communities of color. By curbing greenhouse gas emissions, we can mitigate these adverse effects. Indeed, the transportation sector is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S., according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In 2021, the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions within the transportation sector, according to EPA, were light-duty trucks, including sport utility vehicles, pick-up trucks, and minivans (about 37 percent); medium- and heavy-duty trucks (about 23 percent); and passenger cars (about 21 percent).

Moreover, Section 1024 of Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act called for MPOs to develop plans that would "minimize transportation-related fuel consumption and air pollution." Concerns over equity; sustainability—including habitat protection, criteria pollutants under the Clean Air Act, and greenhouse gas emissions; and the reduction of vehicle dependence and driving overall have only increased. Also, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (IIJA) includes new programs dedicated to emissions reduction and equity, including remediating transportation pollution. As a result, Frontier MPO coordinates and works with the Arkansas Department of Transportation to set reasonable greenhouse emissions targets and performance measures while also promoting active transportation projects and plans.

However, our efforts must extend beyond environmental conservation. Low-income and disadvantaged communities often bear the brunt of pollution. These underrepresented populations

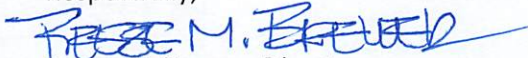
deserve equitable access to clean air, safe water, and green spaces. By prioritizing emission reduction, we uplift these communities and promote environmental justice.

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. 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.

In partnership with Metroplan/the NWARPC/the City of Fort Smith, Frontier MPO will work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and provide energy and transportation cost savings by ensuring continued support and funding of bikeshare programs, greenway corridors, electric vehicle fleets and equipment. In fact, Frontier MPO is currently undertaking work on a electric vehicle charging infrastructure plan.

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.

Respectfully,



Reese M. Brewer, Director

Frontier Metropolitan Planning Organization

1109 S. 16th Street

Fort Smith, AR 72901

479.75.2651