



**Request:** The Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation is requesting a **\$1,500,000** state appropriation to implement the strategies identified in the 2024 Blue Ridge Rising Strategic Plan. This plan, developed and prioritized by local community leaders, will restore and expand the economic vitality and quality of life for the 1,030,846 citizens in this region. This funding will help ensure, that as physical recovery from Helene continues, the gateway communities will be prepared to accommodate visitors when they come. These funds will be used to meet the \$4.8 million match required for the \$5.13 million grant from Appalachia Regional Commission.

**Background:** The Blue Ridge Parkway is the most visited unit of the National Park System with 16.7 million visitors in 2023 - more than Yellowstone, Grand Canyon and Yosemite combined.

The Blue Ridge Parkway travels through Swain, Jackson, Transylvania, Haywood, Henderson, Buncombe, McDowell, Yancey, Mitchell, Burke, Avery, Caldwell, Watauga, Ashe, Wilkes, Alleghany, and Surry counties. Cumulatively along the 469-mile long Parkway, visitors directly spend nearly \$1.4 billion and create more than 17,800 jobs with a total economic impact of about \$1.8 billion.

**Blue Ridge Rising Deliverables:** Blue Ridge Rising Supports Governor Cooper's Response and Recovery goals for western North Carolina for tourism, conservation and outdoor recreation.,

Implementation of the Blue Ridge Rising Strategic Plan includes:

- Strategies to expand Marketing,
- Unify the Region's Voice,
- Increase Protection of Views and Wildlife,
- Expand Education and Workforce Development,
- Build Organizational and Community Capacity, and
- Enhance the Visitor's Experience including the repair of the Motor Road and visitor facilities including trails, campgrounds and picnic areas.

**Local Partnerships:** Blue Ridge Rising partners are working to collaboratively to engage partners along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

- Local communities along the Parkway Corridor are considering resolutions supporting Blue Ridge Rising and the recovery efforts to restore and reopen the Parkway as soon as it can be done safely.

**Contact:** Carolyn Widner Ward, [cward@brpfoundation.org](mailto:cward@brpfoundation.org), 828-776-4547

**RESOLUTION**  
**Supporting Funding for Repairs and Strategic Implementation**  
**of Blue Ridge Rising along the Blue Ridge Parkway**

**WHEREAS**, the Blue Ridge Parkway traverses 469 miles from Afton Mountain in Virginia to the Qualla Boundary in North Carolina and unites these two states' unique mountain cultures and identities with a world-renowned national park that celebrates the places, communities, and people along the Parkway; and

**WHEREAS**, the Blue Ridge Parkway is the most-visited unit of the national park system, attracting nearly seventeen million visitors each year and contributing significantly to the local and regional economies in Virginia and North Carolina; and

**WHEREAS**, the Parkway generates approximately \$1.4 billion in visitor spending and \$1.8 billion in total economic output for the 1,799,000 residents of the surrounding corridor of twenty-nine counties, seven independent Virginia cities, and numerous municipalities in North Carolina and Virginia, including the towns of Buchanan, Fincastle, and Troutville in Botetourt County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation serves as the sole official philanthropic partner to the Blue Ridge Parkway, advocating for necessary funding and resources for the Parkway's maintenance, preservation, and community engagement; and

**WHEREAS**, the Blue Ridge Rising strategic plan provides a roadmap for the sustainable management and enhancement of the Parkway, ensuring that it continues to serve as a vital resource for environmental education, recreation, tourism, and community connection; and

**WHEREAS**, Tropical Storm Helene has caused catastrophic damage and loss of life for several communities in western North Carolina and southwest Virginia, including those communities adjacent to the Parkway; and

**WHEREAS**, repairs are critical to preserving the safety and accessibility of the Parkway and its adjacent communities, which is essential for their economic wellbeing; and

**WHEREAS**, collaboration among local, state, and federal governments is critical in this response and imperative to secure the necessary funding and policies that will sustain and benefit the communities surrounding the Blue Ridge Parkway; and

**WHEREAS**, the establishment of a coalition composed of elected officials and community representatives will enhance advocacy efforts and foster a unified regional voice for the Blue Ridge Parkway corridor.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Botetourt County Board of Supervisors endorses and supports the following:

1. **Funding for Repairs:** Urging state and federal governments to prioritize and allocate funding for repairs along the Blue Ridge Parkway to ensure its continued safety and accessibility;
2. **Implementation of the Blue Ridge Rising Strategic Plan:** Advocating for the full funding and implementation of the Blue Ridge Rising Strategic Plan to enhance visitor experience, preserve natural resources, and promote sustainable tourism along the Parkway;
3. **Collaboration and Support:** Calling upon local, state, and federal officials to collaborate with the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation and other stakeholders to secure resources and policies that benefit the Parkway and its surrounding communities; and
4. **Coalition Creation:** Supporting the formation of a coalition of elected officials and community representatives dedicated to advocating for the Blue Ridge Parkway, ensuring that the needs and voices of the communities along the corridor are effectively represented.
- 5.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to relevant local, state, and federal entities, as well as the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, to demonstrate our unified support for the Parkway and its vital role in our communities.

**ADOPTED** this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October, 2024 by the Botetourt County Board of Supervisors.