RESOLUTION
23-24

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 Caldwell County Board of Commissioners 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 2nd day of December, 2024.

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Randy T. Church, Chairman

Attest: _____
Abby Rich, County Clerk