



## **Advocacy Alert: SB329 Letter to Your Legislator Template**

*Support the South Fork Passage State Trail!*

Subject: Support SB329

Dear Representative/ Senator \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is [YOUR NAME], and I am your constituent from [county, zip code, town, city, neighborhood, or however else you want to identify yourself as constituent]. I write in support of SB329, a bill to authorize the South Fork River in Catawba, Lincoln, and Gaston Counties as a state trail. I urge you to support this bill which will provide economic, recreational, and environmental benefits to the region.

Did you know that outdoor recreation generates \$16.2 billion annually in North Carolina? This industry thrives thanks to the state's beautiful mountains, forests, rivers, and coastline. North Carolina's 14 state trails, which are part of the state park system and span nearly 4,000 miles, play a crucial role in supporting this industry by attracting visitors, creating jobs, and boosting local economies. State trails also promote healthy lifestyles, provide recreational and educational experiences, and help protect North Carolina's land, air, and water. SB329 will expand these benefits in Catawba, Lincoln, and Gaston Counties, enhancing existing recreational opportunities for 20% of the state's population who live within an hour drive.

Following the South Fork River, the proposed 60-mile paddling, hiking, and cycling trail holds rich historical significance, from its ties to the Catawba and Cherokee Nations to its role in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars and the region's 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century textile industry. The South Fork Passage State Trail also supports an array of plant and animal species, including threatened and endangered ones, as well as important habitat, such as wetlands and forests. The South Fork's waters and scenic landscape offer activities from hiking to paddling class II rapids, making it a popular recreation destination.

I support this bill because:

- I want to see North Carolina's outdoor recreation industry grow, local economies thrive, and nearby property values increase.
- I want to preserve the character and history of this rapidly developing region.
- I want to protect the South Fork River's natural beauty, unique habitats, and threatened and endangered species.
- I want to expand recreational opportunities in the region to promote active, healthy, and connected communities.
- I want to enhance the safety of recreational activities on the South Fork through access, maintenance, and communication.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you will support this legislation.

Your Constituent,

[YOUR NAME]