



Department of Economic Development Responds to Local Leadership Regarding Rivian Project

ATLANTA – February 21, 2022 – Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) Commissioner Pat Wilson responded to a letter from the Joint Development Authority (JDA) of Jasper, Morgan, Newton, and Walton Counties and acknowledged by the County Commission Chairs regarding the State of Georgia’s leadership in the Rivian Automotive project. Announced in December 2021, the Stanton Springs North-located project will bring at least 7,500 well-paying direct new jobs and \$5 billion capital investment, the construction of a new Technical College training center, and the creation of a new interchange on I-20. The complete letter from Wilson follows his statement below.

“With tens of thousands of Georgians currently participating in the automotive manufacturing industry, the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) is focused every day on preparing for the massive shift towards electrification within the sector. We are recruiting and growing the jobs of the future so that these and all Georgians can become part of the economy of the future. This does not only mean the recruitment of jobs, but ensuring that investments are environmentally and economically sustainable in the long term. Rivian’s plans for Georgia are the definition of such a project and a generational opportunity for Jasper, Morgan, Newton, and Walton counties as well as the entire state and its citizens.

“As we are moving forward with this significant project, we and the Joint Development Authority (JDA) of Jasper, Morgan, Newton, and Walton counties, are announcing today that GDEcD is establishing a consolidated approach for environmental compliance, public input, and community benefit. By taking these steps together, our goal is to streamline the entire project process, giving community members a strong voice throughout. We will continuously work with our city and county governments to ensure that every concern is heard and every question answered.

“We will collaborate with local leaders to build out a robust process and structure for local advisory committees to give area residents a voice as plans develop. We are preparing staff resources from across state government to support this effort, and look forward to providing additional details and timelines on these particular measures in the near future.

“Rivian will become part of the fabric of the communities it touches. Its positive and far-reaching effects for schools, small businesses, landowners and residents, hospitals, civic organizations, and beyond will transform the region for generations to come. Alongside Rivian and our community partners – we are excited to start this adventure.”

Commissioner Wilson's letter to the Joint Development Authority:

February 21, 2022

Dear Messrs. Banes, Riden, Henry, Silvio and Thompson-

As you know, the automotive industry is experiencing the most significant era of change since the invention of the internal combustion engine: the transition to electrification. This change is happening faster than any of us could have dreamed, and with tens of thousands of Georgians currently participating in the automotive manufacturing industry, it is imperative on us to recruit and grow the jobs of the future so that all hardworking Georgians can become part of the economy of the future.

The Rivian Automotive project is a generational opportunity for Morgan, Jasper, Newton and Walton Counties and for the entire State of Georgia. The project will result in the creation of at least 7,500 well-paying new jobs, capital investment of at least \$5,000,000,000, the construction of a new Technical College training center and the creation of a new I-20 interchange. Additionally, Rivian's decision to locate in your community will provide long-term benefit to your school systems, tax base, workforce, and small business owners for decades to come.

I recently had the opportunity to visit Rivian's Normal, Illinois manufacturing facility, which currently directly employs 4,500 people and has another 1,500 contractors. During that visit, I saw first-hand the positive impact they have made on their chosen community and how Rivian's core mission is to prioritize environmental stewardship in all aspects of its company, including its manufacturing processes. For example, Rivian uses a proprietary process for painting vehicles with water based paints, avoiding the use of solvents. Rivian has also designed a plastic recycling program where the company collects discarded plastics from the ocean and turns them into containers used to store parts throughout the manufacturing facility. Once those containers are at the end of their lifecycles, they are shredded and repurposed into plastics used in the interior of the Rivian vehicles. Additionally, Rivian has partnered with The Nature Conservancy to help protect and preserve the prairie, woodlands and wetlands that make up the 3,800 acre Nachusa Grasslands Preserve near the plant in Normal. These are just a few examples of Rivian's dedication to protecting the natural environment, and we expect that same level of commitment to their new home in Georgia.

As we have seen with large economic development projects across the state, such as Kia Motors in West Point, Gulfstream in Savannah, SK Battery in Commerce, and many others, the location of the Rivian facility will usher in a new era for this entire region. While many will welcome these changes with open arms, changes which include higher wages for local workers and more business opportunities for local small businesses and vendors, we fully understand that some in your communities are concerned about the unknowns of what this project will bring. Our commitment is to partner with county and city governments, local chambers of commerce and nearby businesses to ensure your communities have a voice in this process. The planning phase is the appropriate time to ensure that the public can provide productive and meaningful feedback to both, the State of Georgia and Rivian, so that we can maximize the positive impacts to the community and minimize the challenges. This is the time to work together to make this project successful for all parties.

To that end, we appreciate the perspective in your recent letter (which is attached) that the State of Georgia consider taking the lead on next steps with the Rivian Automotive project. We believe that this approach will enable the State to provide additional resources to improve the process of public input and

feedback by consolidating it into a single forum rather than three individual jurisdictions that have separate rules, regulations and ordinances.

As to the specific points raised in your letter, we agree that the creation of a robust public advisory process solves a number of the collective concerns and is the best way to move forward. We would specifically propose creating four separate committees as follows:

1. Workforce Development
2. Local Business Engagement
3. Site Design and Environmental
4. Civic Engagement, Public Benefits, and Land Conservation

These committees will be staffed by a cross section of state experts, local county representation, and will include members from the private sector and civic organizations. In the coming weeks we will provide more information on the individual committee's membership components and a detailed timeline for these groups to meet and interact with the public.

Additionally, we agree that assurances should be made that Rivian will comply with locally required standards pertaining to water quality, groundwater recharge and runoff. To that end, we believe that the Site Design and Environmental Committee is the best place for members to share information pertaining to Rivian's plans to satisfy these requirements. We also intend to build in compliance into the overarching legal agreements between the State, the JDA, and Rivian. Specifically, we intend to ensure compliance with:

- (i) Applicable Stanton Springs Business Park Zoning regulations;
- (ii) Applicable State of Georgia NPDES and any other applicable environmental permitting and federal permitting required by § 404 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1251 *et seq.*;
- (iii) Stormwater detention designed to handle a 100-year storm event;
- (iv) Limiting impervious surface on the Project Site to 50%;
- (v) Completing an additional hydrology study for review and approval by the Joint Development Authority and local planning departments;
- (vi) Securing all required local, state or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permits for water resources;
- (vii) Tree protection of each jurisdiction in which Rivian develops the Project;
- (viii) Efforts to mitigate the impact of any outdoor lighting;
- (ix) Ensuring setback of no less than 500' from Old Mill Road; and
- (x) No independent commercial or other uses on the Project Site.

We look forward to working with you and Rivian to ensure that this project is a success for the community, Rivian, the State of Georgia, and ultimately all citizens of our state.

Sincerely,



Padgett Wilson
Commissioner

###

Media Contact:

[Marie Gordon](#), 404-962-4075