



February 18, 2026

Dear Whom It May Concern,

East Mississippi Community College (EMCC) is pleased to offer our full support for your efforts to obtain grant funding for the extension of a natural gas line along Highway 16 East in Kemper County. This project represents an important investment in infrastructure that will directly benefit our campus, our students, and the greater Kemper County community.

Our Scooba Campus serves approximately 2,500 students annually, including around 500 residential students, as well as faculty and staff who live on campus. Currently, the campus relies heavily on propane as its primary heating source. This requires the use of multiple storage tanks and additional safety measures. Access to a natural gas system would significantly enhance safety, improve energy efficiency, and reduce operational costs.

In addition to these campus benefits, the Highway 16 East gas line extension would strengthen the local economy, provide essential service options to residents and businesses, and support future growth in eastern Kemper County. It aligns with EMCC's mission to foster regional advancement through education, workforce training, and community partnerships.

East Mississippi Community College is proud to partner with the Kemper County Board of Supervisors and the Kemper County Gas District in support of this project and strongly encourages favorable consideration of the grant request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'DS Alsobrooks'.

Scott Alsobrooks, Ph.D.

President

East Mississippi Community College



February 13, 2026

Supervisor Lee McDonald
President, Kemper County Board of Supervisors
P.O. Box 188
DeKalb, MS 39328

RE: Support for Kemper County Infrastructure Improvements

Dear Supervisor McDonald:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Kemper County Economic Development Authority, we are pleased to offer this letter of strong support for Kemper County's efforts to pursue infrastructure improvements along the Hwy 16 corridor and the Hwy 45 industrial development sites.

It is the Kemper County Economic Development Authority's intent to attract new businesses/companies to our county. As of right now, we are lacking in infrastructure which hinders the growth of the county. With these infrastructure improvements this will allow growth in many directions for Kemper County.

These infrastructure improvements are a critical component of addressing insufficient water resources and providing lower cost, efficiently delivered natural gas to this under-served area. Also, technological improvements and equipment upgrades for the Sheriff's Department will enhance safety and efficiency but also stimulate economic growth, improve quality of life, and ensure equitable access to essential services for all residents and potential industrial customers.

I applaud and support your efforts to secure funding for these impactful improvements that align local, state, and federal strategic goals for the citizens of this county. We committed to collaborating with the Board of Supervisors, community leaders, and key stakeholders to ensure the successful completion of these efforts and look forward to seeing them come to a reality in the very near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven L. Lockley", written in a cursive style.

Steven L. Lockley
Executive Director
Kemper County Economic Development Authority

**STELLA
JONES**



13539 Hwy 45, Scooba, MS 39358
662-476-8000

February 19, 2026

Supervisor Lee McDonald
President, Kemper County Board of Supervisors
P.O. Box 188
DeKalb, MS 39328

RE: Support for Kemper County Infrastructure Improvements

Dear Supervisor McDonald:

On behalf of Stella-Jones, we are pleased to offer this letter of strong support for Kemper County's efforts to pursue infrastructure improvements along the Hwy 16 corridor and the Hwy 45 industrial development sites.

These infrastructure improvements are a critical component of addressing insufficient water resources and providing lower cost, efficiently delivered natural gas to this under-served area. Also, technological improvements and equipment upgrades for the Sheriff's Department will enhance safety and efficiency but also stimulate economic growth, improve quality of life, and ensure equitable access to essential services for all residents and potential industrial customers.

I applaud and support your efforts to secure funding for these impactful improvements that align local, state, and federal strategic goals for the citizens of this county. We committed to collaborating with the Board of Supervisors, community leaders and key stakeholders to ensure the successful completion of these efforts and look forward to seeing them come to reality in the very near future.

Sincerely,



J.J. Bowman
Plant Manager
Stella-Jones



KEMPER COUNTY

Board of Supervisors

280 Veterans Street • Post Office Box 188 • DeKalb, MS 39328
Phone: (601) 743-8291 • Fax: @fax.cspire.com

Roy VanDevender
Supervisor, District 1

Johnny B. Whitsett
Supervisor, District 2

Douglas Scott Johnson
Supervisor, District 3

Lee McDonald
Supervisor, District 4

Christopher Cole
Supervisor, District 5

March 24, 2026

Honorable Michael Guest
450 Cannon House of Representatives Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Kemper County Regional Utility Infrastructure and Public Safety Initiatives

Dear Congressman Michael Guest:

On behalf of the Kemper County Board of Supervisors, thank you for your continued commitment to advancing economic development and strengthening infrastructure across East Central Mississippi. Though we are a small rural county, we possess significant strategic assets that position us for long-term success. With two nearby military installations, abundant natural resources, four-lane highway access, rail connectivity, proximity to the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, and the presence of East Mississippi Community College, our County has the foundational tools necessary to grow our economy and enhance quality of life for our citizens.

Kemper County has made substantial recent investments to expand gas and water infrastructure along the Highway 16 corridor, exemplifying the County's commitment to strategic growth. However, further extension of gas and water infrastructure along Highway 16 and southward on Highway 45 is essential to fully unlock the development potential of several existing industrial sites and to provide critical services to several hundred residential customers. These sites include the 40-acre Weyerhaeuser Site and the 400-acre Sucarnoochee Site on Highway 45, as well as three sites along Highway 16 consisting of 500, 200, and 64 acres. These sites feature CPKC rail access, upgraded electric service through TVA's extension of a 161kV transmission line, and high-speed fiber connectivity provided by AT&T, C Spire, and East Mississippi Electric Power Association. Existing industries such as Brainerd and Stella Jones also stand to benefit significantly from these water and gas improvements.

To support Kemper County and continue the progress underway, we respectfully request your consideration of the following congressionally-directed funding priorities for FY 2027:

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"Peaceful Living With A Purpose"

1. Gas Line Infrastructure, 6' Gas Main Extension

\$5.5 million - USDA Rural Economic Development Grant

Providing reliable and affordable natural gas service has been a longstanding priority of the Board of Supervisors and regional industry leaders. The County has completed installation of gas line infrastructure to a point near Scooba on Highway 16. Building on this foundation, Kemper County has planned the final phase of gas service expansion: extending the line from the current terminus near Scooba along Highway 16 to Highway 45, and then south along Highway 45 to the Sucarnoochee community.

Kemper County is committing \$1 million through an East Mississippi Electric Power Association (EMEPA) loan to advance the Highway 16 extension to design and construction. This project is further leveraged with a \$300,000 ARC grant to install a valve station at the current terminus of the line.

The proposed 15.9-mile extension would serve up to 300 residential customers and 48 commercial customers, while also providing critical gas service to East Mississippi Community College, which is currently dependent on above-ground propane storage tanks for gas service. Conversion to natural gas would offer a safer, more economical, and more efficient energy source for approximately 2,500 annual students, including 500 residential students, as well as faculty and staff. This extension would also ensure that prospective industrial users have access to dependable and competitively priced energy.

2. Water Infrastructure, 12" Water Main Extension

Request: \$4.6 million - EPA STAG Drinking Water SRF Program

The Kemper County Utility District has invested \$2.4 million in ARPA, state, and local funds to provide 4.4 miles of water infrastructure along Highway 16 from Mark Cobb Road to Scooba. Building on this progress, the County has planned a 10.4-mile, 12-inch water main extension along Highway 16 East from the current terminus near Scooba to Highway 45, and then south down Highway 45 to the Sucarnoochee community. Conceptual engineering and environmental studies for these segments is complete, utilizing County resources.

This 10.4-mile extension will eliminate current utility limitations, enable development-ready sites, and significantly enhance the County's competitiveness in attracting private investment. Without this improvement, prospective industries may bypass Kemper County due to insufficient water capacity. With it, the County will be positioned to generate new employment opportunities, expand the tax base, and stimulate secondary economic activity in housing, retail, and services.

Kemper County is fully prepared to meet applicable local matching requirements associated with these infrastructure investments.

3. Sheriff's Department Equipment and Technology Upgrades Request: \$560,000 - COPS Technology and Equipment Program

In addition to infrastructure investment, Kemper County must also ensure that public safety resources keep pace with regional growth. Covering approximately 767 square miles, Kemper County is predominantly rural and includes communities such as DeKalb and Scooba. Because most municipalities lack independent police forces, residents rely heavily on the Kemper County Sheriffs Office (KCSO) as the primary law enforcement provider for patrol, emergency response, investigations, court security, and jail operations.

While Kemper County is not among the highest-crime areas in Mississippi, it ranks in the 49th percentile for safety nationwide, indicating crime levels near the national average and ongoing risks to residents. Crime is geographically concentrated in certain areas, increasing the operational demands placed on limited personnel and resources. Moreover, Crimegrade.org projected the per-resident cost of crime in 2025 was approximately \$464: 72 percent higher than the Mississippi state average, demonstrating the disproportionate law enforcement burden borne by rural communities.

Investment in modern equipment and technology will strengthen response capabilities, improve officer safety, enhance investigative efficiency, and better serve citizens across the County's expansive geography.

Together, these initiatives represent a comprehensive strategy to enhance Kemper County's economic competitiveness while protecting the safety and well-being of its residents. Strategic federal partnership at this stage will accelerate infrastructure readiness, attract private capital investment, create jobs, and strengthen long-term regional resilience.

We look forward to meeting with you and your staff in Washington, D.C., on March 24 to further discuss these priorities and to seek your guidance and support. Should you or your staff require additional information, please contact me at (769) 219-8549 or via email at kcbos4@kempercountymiss.gov.

Thank you for your consideration and continued leadership on behalf of Mississippi's rural communities.

Sincerely,



Lee McDonald, President
Kemper County Board of Supervisors

BUDGET

DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNIT OF MEASURE	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
GAS LINE FROM REGULATOR STATION TO SUCARNOOCHEE				
Mobilization	1.00	L.S.	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 150,000.00
Clearing and Grubbing	20.00	ACRE	\$,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
6" HDPE Pipe	84,262.00	L.F.	\$ 65.00	\$ 5,477,030.00
6" Ball Valve	16.00	EA.	\$ 1,850.00	\$ 29,600.00
Road Bores w/ Casing for 6" Pipe	7,500.00	L.F.	\$ 150.00	\$ 1,125,000.00
Railroad Bores	200.00	L.F.	\$ 185.00	\$ 37,000.00
Underground Survey	84,262.00	L.F.	\$ 1.50	\$ 126,393.00
High Pressure Service Connections	10.00	EA.	\$ 2,850.00	\$ 28,500.00
Silt Fence	15,000.00	L.F.	\$ 8.00	\$ 120,000.00
Safety Fence	1,800.00	L.F.	\$ 6.00	\$ 10,800.00
Hay Bale	300.00	EA.	\$ 24.00	\$ 7,200.00
Trench Breaker (Sand)	20.00	EA.	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 48,000.00
Seeding	63.00	ACRE	\$ 2,450.00	\$ 154,350.00
Contingencies	1.00	L.S.	\$ 344,000.00	\$ 344,000.00
		Gas Line Subtotal		\$ 7,697,873.00
MISCELLANEOUS				
Right-of-Way Acquisition* (County Purchase)	20.00	ACRE	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 70,000.00
Design and Right-of-Way Surveys				\$ 53,000.00
Engineering				\$ 385,000.00
Construction Inspection				\$ 154,000.00
		Miscellaneous Subtotal		\$ 662,000.00
		PROJECT TOTAL		\$ 8,359,873.00