

## PETITION

**As the people** of the USA, especially of Newton County, Arkansas and surrounding counties, but also for all the people of many other states who visit our home territory for the purpose of accessing the opportunities provided by the Buffalo River/National Park, **we hereby do authorize and present this formal petition re the 1931 Buffalo River bridge at Pruitt/National Register of Historic Places and re Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) for the following purposes:**

To ensure that as **rectification for ARDOT's breach of promise\***, and unauthorized retraction of initial promises, covenant, letters, etc. assuring former Newton County Judge Harold Smith that the 1931 Pruitt Bridge with approaches would be given to Newton County upon completion of the new replacement bridge, and being that it appears said breach of promise followed ARDOT's change of mind, INSTEAD, without proper public notification or proper public input, or without proper government process, ARDOT entered into non-publicized agreements with NPS/BNR and without federally required public notices and/or hearings, to give what was promised to Newton County to the NPS (which when publicly revealed ARDOT/NPS also aborted that plan, which situation according to previous ARDOT Director <sup>DAW</sup> Larry Flowers' letter to former Senator Randy Lavery resulted in NPS purposely not cooperating with environmental assessment for new bridge which had the effect of stalling the new bridge project for years and thereby continually increasing the danger of the Highway 7 motorists far longer than was necessary). For all those and more reasons (including apparent spreading of misinformation by ARDOT and NPS and apparent pressure on subsequent county judges to retract Harold Smith's intent, and to usurp the authority of the Newton County Quorum Court (Art 7, Sect 28, Ark State Const.) to which former County Judge Griffith had deferred the matter, and for apparent failure by ARDOT to meet Section 106 and 110 of NHPA requirements), so therefore we now Petition that ARDOT will be required to provide all conditions necessary for Newton County to accept ownership that was previously promised—and further be required to assign, in perpetuity, staff personnel within ARDOT to manage the following tasks for Newton County, including, but not limited to: the funding applications for the county; the receipt and appropriate disbursement of all available funding for the benefit of the county-owned bridge-with-approaches asset; the oversight and execution of general maintenance for the bridge; the development of the pedestrian/cyclist aspect of the bridge-with-approaches as a non-profit county park; and to provide the legal staff to explain and manage very limited and/or non-existent county liability for bridge ownership by the county, and any other necessary tasks for the county, and that fee simple ownership of the 1931 Buffalo River bridge at Pruitt with approaches be transferred in perpetuity to Newton County by ARDOT upon completion of the new replacement bridge. And thereafter, ARDOT provide comprehensive monthly reports to the Newton County Quorum Court of ARDOT financial, maintenance, development, etc. actions pertaining to their care and maintenance oversight of the historic Pruitt bridge belonging to Newton County in perpetuity.

**Therefore, we the undersigned people (on following pages) of voting age, do present this petition to all relevant constitutional officers, (including U.S. Senator John Boozman, Gov. Hutchison, State Senator Breanne Davis, State Representative Keith Slape, Newton County Quorum/County Court Justices, Newton County Judge Warren Campbell, etc.) requesting that ARDOT be ordered NOT to destroy our old Buffalo River bridge with approaches at Pruitt, but rather to transfer ownership to Newton County, with ARDOT maintaining responsibility as described above for the purpose of preserving its historic, cultural, social, and logistical, etc. value and to protect the river from the damages which would result from unwarranted destruction of it. We contend that such a usage of funds/staff by the agents of ARDOT to manage the bridge property for Newton County would be a true and rightful purpose for the tax-paying local people, the tourists, and the heritage of Newton County, Arkansas, and the USA, and would provide the best upkeep for the bridge/approaches far into the future, and thereby rectify the wrongful actions by ARDOT and NPS which appear to us to have been conspired against Newton County, thereby having extended the safety risks of motorists who have been denied a functionally safe new bridge at least since 2009 due to NPS interference and subsequent "stalling" of the matter with ARDOT complicity.**

(\*Refer to the Authoritative Evidence Documents Packet presented to Newton County Quorum Court on December 2, 2019)

