

Beachner Grain, Inc.
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February 18, 2020

To: Senate Ways and Means Committee

From: Gary Beachner, President, Beachner Grain, Inc.

RE: Proponent Testimony for Senate Bill No. 375; for the FORWARD Transportation Plan

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of this bill which sets forth the state's next transportation plan. Beachner Grain, Inc is a 33 year old family-owned company, headquartered in Parsons, KS. Our company owns and operates two dozen grain storage facilities in Kansas, where we handle, trade and transport almost 40 million bushels of grain annually. At most of these sites we also retail farm production inputs, like livestock feed, seed, fertilizers and chemicals. Our company also owns and operates two commercial cattle feedyards in Kansas, where we feed, transport and harvest almost 170,000 head of cattle annually.

Our company and the agricultural producers we serve, depend upon the Kansas highways and rail systems every day, to transport grain, feed products, crop production inputs, and livestock, around the state, and to markets outside the state. For these reasons, we support the adequate funding of our state transportation infrastructure, including road and bridge maintenance and preservation projects, and rail infrastructure investments.

Every year, Kansas ag producers transport hundreds of millions of bushels of grain from their fields to market. Every day, Kansas grain elevators transport millions of bushels of grain by either truck or rail, to feed yards, feed mills, flour mills, ethanol plants, processing plants, train loading facilities, and out of the state to export markets.

Kansas crop production continues to grow, and in recent years Kansas has experienced record, or near record, yields in corn and soybeans. Kansas transportation needs will continue to grow accordingly.

The health and safety of bridges within our transportation infrastructure is vitally important. Recent studies indicate that approximately one fourth of the KDOT maintained bridges are in "fair" or "poor" condition. For this reason, we support the stated goal of this FORWARD Transportation Plan, to continue to make investment in bridge maintenance a high priority.

Railroad infrastructure is also important to our industry's ability to transport the abundance of our state's grain production to consumers around the globe. For this reason, well maintained class one rail lines, short line railroads, and rail crossings, are also important to our industry and agricultural economy.

For all of the reasons I've just mentioned, I believe our state transportation infrastructure is vital to production agriculture, and the entire Kansas agricultural economy. Kansas must have adequate and well-maintained roads, bridges, and rail lines to survive and compete effectively in this global economy, or this system will degrade and negatively affect the Kansas economy.

I would like to thank the Secretary of Transportation and her staff for the hard work they've put into the Transportation Task Force hearings around the state, and the good work of all of the people within the Kansas Department of Transportation, in putting together this relevant and responsive FORWARD Transportation Plan.

Thank you for allowing us to testify in support of Senate Bill 375. We heartily support this Transportation bill, and ask the committee to pass this bill out favorably.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gary Beachner". The signature is fluid and extends across the width of the page.

Gary Beachner, President
Beachner Grain, Inc.