



Kansas Grain & Feed Association
Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association
Renew Kansas Biofuels Association

February 18, 2020

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
From: Randy Stookey, Senior Vice President & General Counsel
Re: **Proponent Testimony with Concerns on Senate Bill 375, providing for the FORWARD Transportation program**

Chairperson McGinn and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 375. This testimony is being submitted jointly by the Kansas Grain and Feed Association (KGFA), Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association (KARA), and Renew Kansas Biofuels Association (Renew Kansas).

KGFA is the state association of the grain receiving, storage, processing and shipping industry in Kansas. KGFA's membership represents 99% of the commercially licensed grain storage in the state. KARA is the trade association of over 700 agribusiness firms that supply fertilizers, crop protection products, seed, petroleum products, and agronomic services to Kansas farmers. Renew Kansas is the trade association of the Kansas biofuels industry.

Broadly, members of these associations operate in the area of agribusiness, an industry that relies heavily on an adequate and well-maintained transportation infrastructure system to move agricultural inputs, commodities and biofuels to varied markets.

We would like to thank the Secretary of Transportation and her staff for the hard work they have put in through the Transportation Task Force hearings, and putting together the FORWARD transportation plan.

The Kansas agricultural economy is highly dependent on our state's transportation infrastructure. Kansas agricultural producers utilize our state's transportation system when receiving crop inputs from agricultural retailers. These inputs must be received in a timely manner in order to effectively receive fertilizer, fuel, and other crop inputs during planting season. Similarly, during harvest, Kansas producers use those same roads to transport grain to Kansas elevators.

Every year, Kansas farmers truck hundreds of millions of bushels of grain from their fields to local grain elevators. In fact, in recent years, Kansas has experienced record, or near record, yields in corn and soybeans. Due to the nature of the agricultural production industry, and the geographic location of grain

elevators, the transportation of agriculture inputs and commodities is very often dependent on truck transport on state roads.

After receiving grain from farmers, Kansas elevators store and treat grain until it can be marketed. When marketed, the grain is transported by truck or rail to feed yards, mills, biofuel plants, or to the export market. Similarly, ethanol, biodiesel and distillers grains are transported to market via Kansas roads and rail.

Additionally, the health and safety of bridges is vitally important to our overall transportation network. Recent studies have demonstrated that approximately one-quarter of KDOT-maintained bridges are in “fair” or “poor” condition. We must ensure adequate maintenance of those bridges through continued investment.

We support the stated goals of FORWARD to:

- Utilize local consultation on future projects;
- Follow a “rolling-program” approach to ensure that the most necessary and relevant projects in any area are given priority, while providing flexibility as needed in the future; and,
- Invest in bridge maintenance and rail maintenance, in addition to the state highway system.

Our associations support adequate funding of the FORWARD plan, including maintenance and preservation projects, through the mechanisms currently existing in Kansas law. These mechanisms generate adequate funding for our roads, bridges, and rail system when those funds are used for their intended, lawful purpose, and are not otherwise diverted to other state spending priorities. We support the use of transportation program funds solely for the use of the state transportation system rather than other non-transportation expenses.

Adequate and well-maintained roads, bridges, railroad infrastructure for class one, short line, and rail crossings are all vital to the Kansas agricultural industries’ ability to market products now and in the future.

Thank you for allowing us to testify in support of SB 375. We stand in support of the bill and would ask that the committee pass the bill out favorably.