

February 18, 2020

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brett Letkowski and I am a Principal and Senior Vice President at TranSystems. I am based out of Wichita, and appear before you today in my role as Chairman and on behalf of the South Central Kansas Transportation Coalition (a program of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce). Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony in support of HB 2588, AN ACT concerning transportation; providing for the FORWARD transportation program.

Because a strong transportation infrastructure is critical to developing and expanding commerce, the Wichita Chamber convened key private sector business members and local governments in the region to form the South Central Kansas Transportation Coalition. Members of the South Central Kansas Transportation Coalition come from all across our 10-county region and include Wichita, Sedgwick County, Derby, Newton, the Regional Economic Area Partnership, the Greater Wichita Partnership, WAMPO, Andover, Bel Aire, other local governments, and a number of private sector representatives both inside and outside the transportation industry. Collectively, we have identified our region's most significantly important projects (see the attached tier list) which include many of the modes of transportation provided by FORWARD. We are fully supportive of FORWARD for not only looking at the highway transportation network but all modes of transportation.

The Coalition advocates for funding and policies to address not only regionally significant transportation infrastructure needs but also improvements that will improve safety and economic development. Some of these needs include the North Junction (highlighted in the Wichita Chamber's testimony), East Kellogg, the Northwest Bypass, K-96 Hillside to Greenwich, ARC 95, K-254, US-50, I-235, US-54, transit, passenger rail, and others. South Central Kansas is united in our support for these regionally significant transportation priorities because we recognize the impact that these projects have on the entire region's economic growth. Please find attached a copy of the map and list of regionally significant projects identified by our Coalition.

As you know, HB 2588 would authorize a new comprehensive transportation plan called FORWARD. Of significant note is that FORWARD would provide additional dollars to cities and counties in meeting their responsibilities for the construction, reconstruction and maintenance of roads and bridges to provide safer transportation networks and economic development opportunities all across our state. There are transportation needs all across the state. FORWARD requires \$8M of investment per county, which will ensure that we are preserving the highway system across the state. If we don't act now, the

cost to repair and make improvements to our transportation system will only grow each year, costing millions more in the future.

A new comprehensive transportation plan is crucial to our continued success as a state and as a region. The Coalition believes it's important for the state to have a long-term plan, as shown by our support for this 10-year program, but we also like the two-year rolling basis of project selection. The City of Newton, a member of the Coalition, cooperated with the state to return dollars from a funded T-WORKS project that is not needed at this time. This is a great example of why we need a program with more flexibility. Our Coalition also appreciates the more frequent local consults required by HB 2588.

The South Central Kansas Transportation Coalition stands in strong support of HB 2588 for the reasons stated above and many more. We urge the Committee to report HB 2588 favorable for passage. Thank you Mr. Chair and I will be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Very truly yours,

Brett Letkowski (TranSystems)
Chairman, South Central Kansas Transportation Coalition