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Date: February 18, 2020

To: Representative Troy Waymaster, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee

From: Shahira Stafford, Kansas Cooperative Council

RE: House Bill 2588, FORWARD transportation plan

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2588. My name is Shahira Stafford, and I am commenting on behalf of the Kansas Cooperative Council (KCC). The KCC represents all types of cooperative businesses in Kansas with members from various sectors including agriculture, utilities, financial, and consumer co-ops.

Agricultural cooperatives often have grain, agronomy, precision ag, seed, feed, and fuel operations. Our grain elevators store millions of bushels of wheat, corn, milo, soybeans and other agricultural commodities. After purchasing grain from local farmers, it is stored then marketed to buyers both locally and around the world. In order to move this grain to market, it must be transported to either a local buyer or shipped across the state or country. Some Kansas grain elevators are located near a servicing rail line, but a significant portion of our membership must rely on truck transport for moving grain.

There are several provisions in the new transportation plan that we believe will improve this mode of transportation that our members depend on every day:

- ⇒ Better geographic distribution of modernization and expansion projects will benefit rural and urban areas alike.
- ⇒ Prioritization of safety and preservation work will restore the health of the over 11,000 bridges in fair or poor condition.
- ⇒ Broadband expansion through the broadband infrastructure grant fund will give farmers more tools to improve yields and operate at greater efficiency.
- ⇒ Clarity that current funding mechanisms are levied for transportation purposes only will help ensure adequate funding for the State Highway Fund.

The KCC appreciates the Kansas Department of Transportation's FORWARD-thinking plan and their consideration of the agricultural industry's needs. For these reasons, we support HB 2588 and ask the committee to recommend the bill favorably. Thank you.