

Beachner Grain, Inc.
2600 Flynn Drive
Parsons, KS 67357

Phone 620-820-8600

Fax 620-820-8699

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Senator Carolyn McGinn
Representative Richard Proehl
Co-Chairpersons
Kansas Joint Transportation Vision Task Force

Dear Senator McGinn and Representative Proehl,

I am writing today to encourage the Joint Legislative Transportation Vision Task Force to continue to support Kansas railroads and rail shippers as you develop the state's future transportation plan.

As a rail shipper on the South Kansas and Oklahoma railroad (SKOL) in 7 southeast Kansas communities, we feel that continuing programs through KDOT for railroads, rail shippers and receivers, and municipalities, is critical in supporting local and regional economic development across the state. The viability of rail as part of our transportation system is vital in our state's continued ability to compete in the national and international marketplace.

Through programs such as the State Rail Service Improvement Fund (SRSIF) as well as the Multi-modal (Transload) Facility pilot program, Kansas has continued its place as a leader in rail development and support as part of the national freight network.

Through the SRSIF, funds are available to assist in projects that will assist in the continued business growth across the state as well as ensure the maintenance of the state's rail infrastructure. Whether it is upgrading track speeds, building additional track capacity or supporting a customer expansion, this fund allows for the ability to drive economic growth within both our rural and metro communities alike. Through this program, the SKOL railroad has seen carload growth double within the past 15 years. This growth means reducing truck traffic across Kansas highways by 140,000 trucks annually.

Additionally, KDOT's recent pilot program that assisted in the funding of two multi-modal facilities across the state should again, strongly be considered. These facilities create rail options for customers that otherwise might not be able to afford rail access and opens up markets across the United States. This program is a very positive way in which to drive economic growth both for customers and communities within Kansas.

In conclusion, as a Kansas rail shipper, we strongly recommend and request that the Joint Legislative Transportation Vision Task Force continue to fund the SRSIF as it is today, and strongly consider continuing the Multi-modal Facility development program. The limited investment from the state not only creates a successful public/private partnership, it generates significant value to both the local businesses and the communities as a whole.

Thank you again for your time and effort in serving on the task force.

Sincerely,



Gary Beachner, president