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September 19, 2018

TO: Kansas Department of Transportation, c/o Jan Peters, Great Bend Chamber of Commerce

FROM: Dave Wilson, General Manager

CC: Taggart Wall, City Manager (Sterling)

RE: Transportation planning in general; K-96 project in specific

I write from a commercial perspective in Sterling, representing an employee pool totaling over 100 persons. Please consider me strongly supportive of a resumption of pending highway development in Kansas. More specifically, I support the effort to replace the dangerous and obsolete segment of K-96 from southeast of Nickerson to north of Sterling.

Sterling Services values the economic potential of highway development. As I expressed in T-WORKS local-input meetings leading up to the K-96 project's high-priority selection in 2012, *I support a K-96 project with a single interchange as close to Sterling as proper highway design allows*, which is what the current project design shows.

100% of Sterling Services' product is exported outside of Rice County; 99% outside of Kansas; and an increasing portion outside of the United States. Modern regional highways and a central location on our continental land mass have historically been a competitive advantage for us—once we got past the dangerous and obsolete stretch of K-96 south of Sterling. So we regarded the legislature's reduced emphasis on highway development with anxiety, especially occurring as it did nearly on the eve of the construction phase for K-96. We have further regretted that K-96 remains risky for our neighbors, our customers, our vendors, and our employees.

Commerce aside, the deficiencies of K-96 south of Sterling were rendered tragically apparent in March 2014 when a key, young employee who commuted to Sterling for her job with us lost her life in a two-vehicle accident on K96 during winter conditions. I want no repeat of that occurrence, so I diligently avoid that stretch of road and discourage others from using it.

Thank you for considering my perspective. Please vigorously pursue renewed highway development statewide, and specifically please move ahead on K-96 from Nickerson to Sterling.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dave Wilson". The signature is fluid and somewhat abstract, with overlapping loops.

Dave Wilson