



FARMERS CO-OPERATIVE GRAIN ASSOCIATION
524 E. Parallel
CONWAY SPRINGS, KS 67031
620-456-2222 / Fax 620-456-2163

P.O. Box 68
124 S. Lincoln
BELLE PLAINE, KS 67013
620-488-3537

May 17, 2024

The Honorable Amit Bose, Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: **Watco's 2023/2024 CRISI Grant Program Application: "Strategic Bridge Improvement and Sustainability Project"**

Dear Administrator Bose;

On behalf of Farmers Cooperative Grain Conway Springs KS, I want to extend my full support for Watco's 2023/2024 CRISI Grant Application - *Strategic Bridge Improvement and Sustainability Project*. This project proposes to complete at least 30% preliminary engineering and design work, including all environmental work, for 116 strategic railroad bridges that traverse waterways across the entire Watco network. These bridges are critical to safe and efficient railroad service to our facility(s).

The Farmers Cooperative Grain of Conway Springs KS is a grain elevator in southern Kansas and rail shipments are key role to be successful in our business.

Further weight restrictions and/or rail service disruptions due to the condition of the bridge(s) that serve our facility(s) would severely impact the economics of our business model and would result in more truck traffic navigating local roads through business, commercial and residential areas to reach our plant. I understand Watco is applying for a federal CRISI grant of \$15.2M and will be providing a local match of \$3.8M if awarded. I applaud Watco for taking this big step forward in trying to address its' infrastructure challenges today and in the future.

Farmers Cooperative Grain Conway Springs KS supports modern infrastructure that helps our economy grow and enhances the safety of the communities we call home, and certainly supports this CRISI grant application.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Stevens".

Chris Stevens G.M.
Farmers Coop Grain