

February 24, 2025

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
February 25, 2025
Part of
Public Record

Re: *Kansas Department of Transportation and Sunflower Redevelopment, LLC – Petition for Declaratory Order, Docket No. FD 36817*

Dear Chief Brown:

I'm writing to convey my support for the Petition for Declaratory Order that was filed jointly by Kansas Department of Transportation ("KDOT") and Sunflower Redevelopment, LLC ("SRL") relating to a former railroad track located in De Soto, Kansas. Granting the Declaratory Order will pave the way for KDOT to build a new interchange in the area where that track is located, which, through the collaborative planning efforts of KDOT and Johnson County, is determined to be critical infrastructure needed to improve current traffic conditions and to service new development coming imminently to the region. Johnson County understands the opportunity for remarkable economic development opportunities in this area, such as the Panasonic electric battery plant, but those opportunities will not be fully realized without a new interchange.

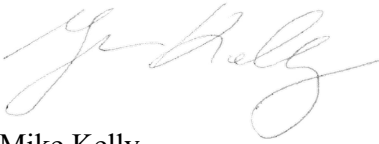
The track in question is located just north of the former Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant ("Sunflower"), which is now known as Astra Enterprise Park, or Astra. Decades ago, this railroad track was owned by the federal government and was used to service its munitions production efforts at Sunflower. However, over 25 years ago, the federal government closed Sunflower and removed the railroad tracks located within its boundaries. Subsequently, in 2005, Sunflower was conveyed to SRL for its redevelopment into Astra Enterprise Park.

As part of SRL's redevelopment efforts, Panasonic's new four-billion-dollar manufacturing facility has been constructed within Astra and, with it, thousands of new jobs and residents are coming to Johnson County. KDOT has rightfully anticipated the need to accommodate the increase in activity spurred by the opening of the facility and has an agreement in principle with SRL whereby KDOT will acquire from SRL that certain railroad track described in the Petition and will build a new highway interchange at K-10 and Lexington Avenue. I cannot overstate the importance of this new interchange to facilitate both existing

vehicular traffic in the region and the thousands of more daily trips that are going to be added to the existing traffic network.

Construction of this new interchange will play a vital role in ushering in an immense amount of economic development and community progress, the likes of which this County and State have never seen. As a result, I respectfully request your prompt review and approval of the Petition. Please contact me if you have any questions about the County's support for this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mike Kelly".

Mike Kelly
Chairman
Johnson County Board of County Commissioners