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Creating connections to  
empower agriculture

Wednesday, February 12

The Honorable Dan Ruby  
Chairman North Dakota House Transportation Committee Chairman  
State Capitol  
600 East Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58505

Re: HB1614, relating to the operation of an automated truck tractor

Chairman Ruby, members of the Committee, my name is Heidi St. Clair, Director of Supply Chain Automation for CHS Inc. Governed by a 17-member farmer board, CHS is a diversified agriculture and energy cooperative based in Minnesota, with significant North Dakota investment.

Since 2022, CHS has been piloting automated driving technology to supplement our workforce and streamline some of our operations. One challenge we – and many businesses – face is demographic trends that forecast an increasing shortage of labor. As we work to address that challenge, we look to innovation and technology that could help supplement our workforce.

To that end, CHS has been conducting research and development on how automated driving systems might further support our integrated, end-to-end supply chain. At the beginning of the project, CHS identified safety as the number one priority for testing automated driving technology and we developed a rigorous five-step testing plan.

Over the past few years, we have had a specialized team of drivers participating in this pilot who are trained to expertly guide and monitor the vehicles. We have logged more than 20,000 miles, 250 loads and 12.4 million pounds of soybean oil between two facilities in Minnesota.

As you review HB1614, I encourage you and North Dakota officials to help companies stay competitive and move supply chains forward. To do so, please consider a consistent framework for automated vehicle testing that is grounded in safety and accessibility and based on economic realities.

CHS looks forward to working with you and partners like the North Dakota Department of Transportation, North Dakota Motor Carrier Association and commodity organizations to test automated vehicle technology safely in agriculture, energy and transportation supply chains.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Heidi St. Clair  
Director, Supply Chain Automation  
CHS Inc.