

**Special Committee on Wisconsin's
Transportation Network Infrastructure**

Statement of

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Senator Kanavas, members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on the K-R-M commuter rail project.

SC Johnson has been an enthusiastic supporter of K-R-M ever since the early feasibility study conducted by the SE Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. That study concluded that extending METRA service from Chicago beyond Kenosha to Milwaukee on existing tracks is not just feasible, but would compare very favorably to numerous commuter rail projects around the country which have received federal government support.

The original study - and a subsequent SEWRPC study - have detailed numerous benefits which would accrue if K-R-M is implemented, including:

- economic development and job growth;
- increased real estate values and a stronger tax base in local communities; and
- enhanced quality of life.

I would like to speak a moment about this last factor.

When this Committee thinks about infrastructure, please don't limit the scope of your inquiry to the traditional definition. To business today, infrastructure means more than roads, ports, airports and railroad lines. That traditional infrastructure, frankly, is more or less a given. For companies like SC Johnson, we also consider "infrastructure" to include quality of life. By that I mean a clean environment, and access to cultural, entertainment and educational opportunities. Quality of life is a fundamental requirement to attracting and keeping talented people in the new economy. This is something which companies study when looking to expand or relocate.

At SC Johnson, we love SE Wisconsin and we love Racine. We've been here for 118 years. But I'll be frank. The existing attributes for SE Wisconsin are often not good enough for a graduating student at a top business school. And often they are not good enough for a young professional we are trying to recruit from Boston, New York or the Bay area. At one time, the quality of the position offered might have been enough. But today, it is not.

The number one reason recruits do not select SC Johnson as a place to work is our location.

Why is that? We have the Lake. We have affordable living. We have the culture and sports of Milwaukee and Chicago. But Racine and other communities in SE Wisconsin are not connected to Chicago and Milwaukee the way communities are in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco and many other metropolitan areas. Young people today want this mobility; they want commuting options for themselves and their spouses.

So we believe K-R-M is a practical and quite efficient way to benefit not only the economy - but also the quality of life in our state.

Mr. Chairman, I would be pleased to answer questions from the Committee.