



Nicole Westadt  
Office of Transportation System Management  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
395 John Ireland Boulevard  
St Paul, MN 55155

July 21, 2025

**Re: Letter of Support for Corridors of Commerce Readiness Advancement – I-35 Thompson Hill Reconstruction with Truck Climbing Lane Extension**

Dear Ms. Westadt,

On behalf of the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC), I am writing to express our support for the I-35 Thompson Hill Reconstruction with Truck Climbing Lane Extension application for funding through the Corridors of Commerce Readiness Advancement solicitation.

ARDC is a multidisciplined planning and development organization serving the NE MN counties of Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis, as well as Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake Tribal lands. Our mission is to provide local government and citizens groups with a means to work cooperatively in identifying needs, solving problems and fostering local leadership. As a result, ARDC is extremely interested in projects that can deliver strong economic impact and safety improvements in our communities. The I-35 Thompson Hill corridor provides a critical connection for residents, tourists, and freight movement. The economic impact of this project is significant not only to the Duluth Superior area, but to the entire region. The inclusion of an extension of the truck climbing lane that would restore I-35 to good condition, modernizing freight accommodation and strengthening long term operations and safety are all key pieces of this project that support our mission and make this project a priority.

ARDC believes this work will have a significant impact on the economic viability of the region as well as the safety of residents in the region. Thank you for your consideration of this important project. ARDC looks forward to supporting this work in any way that we can be of assistance. Please contact me @ [kkane@ardc.org](mailto:kkane@ardc.org) with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristi Kane".

Kristi Kane  
ARDC, Executive Director