



House Bill 2369 Support

Written Testimony submitted to the
House Appropriations Committee

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of its nearly 1,000 members, the Topeka Chamber serves as the voice for the business community in Topeka and Shawnee County. The Chamber's top legislative priority in 2019 is to preserve and modernize the Polk Quincy Viaduct in downtown Topeka. Accordingly, the Topeka Chamber has taken a keen interest in the work of the Joint Legislative Vision Task Force and the 2019 legislature as it acts upon the Task Force's recommendations.

In 2018, the Joint Task Force heard from many constituencies across the state all contending their highway projects are paramount.¹ Notwithstanding the broad diversity of views expressed, one fact could not be denied: the State lacks sufficient funds to pay for more than a fraction of the desired highway work. For this reason, the secretary of transportation has made clear her department's need to seek multiple sources of revenue and alternative methods for delivering project work.

Whereas toll roads in Kansas are allowed under current law only when the project can be *wholly* financed through toll road revenue bonds, HB 2369 would enable the secretary to

¹ Topeka officials made their case for the Polk Quincy Viaduct:

- Updating this portion of I-70 to make it safer and increase its capacity is a key to continued growth all along the area from Manhattan to Kansas City which has come to be called the Animal Health Corridor;
- The bridge is at the end of its design life, as its deteriorated condition amply demonstrates, while traffic volumes have increased substantially;
- The viaduct does not satisfy current federal standards for curvature or shoulder width;
- The uninterrupted flow of people and goods across the state via Interstate 70 is a regional and statewide concern; and
- Topeka City officials have pledged to work with the State of Kansas to identify a dynamic funding mix to pay for the project.



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construct toll roads which may be *partially* financed through tolls. This change is necessary to give the secretary flexibility to utilize tolling as a source of revenue for projects in which the costs exceed the expected revenue from tolling.

Every local community wishing to see its highways upgraded will have to decide for itself whether tolling is an acceptable match option. Topeka is no different. The Topeka Chamber's support of SB 192 does not mean the community has yet embraced tolling for local highway projects. However, clearly the secretary needs the flexibility this bill offers in order to begin to fulfill the state's large appetite for long-overdue highway improvements.

We urge you to support House Bill 2369.

Contact:

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