



Memo To: House Appropriation Committee

From: Mark Augustine, Owner of Triplett, Inc. doing business as 24-7 Travel Stores in Kansas

Date: March 18, 2019

Re: Comments opposing HB 2369

Mr. Chairman Waymaster and members of House Appropriations Committee:

My name is Mark Augustine, I am the Owner of ten 24-7 Travel Stores in Kansas, a second-generation business started in 1963 based in Salina, Kansas and starting the transition to a third generation operating along the interstate system in Kansas. My Father-In-Law, Larry Triplett, started the business just seven years after President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the **National Interstate and Defense Highways Act** in Salina, Kansas and quickly expanded into other cities along the new interstate system.

The Interstate System created many benefits other than the ability of moving our military to America's Economy. It provided much needed commerce throughout the United States by connecting every state to every size of community along its route. 24-7 Travel Stores are in the following Kansas communities; Goodland, Colby, Wakeeney, Hays, Russell, Salina, McPherson, Abilene and Maple Hill employing over 120 Kansan's with payroll and benefits totaling \$5,286,316, plus our food partners employ an additional 140 Kansan's at these facilities. In addition, 24-7 Travel Stores collected and submitted \$9,201,280 in fuel taxes, \$946,595 in sales tax and paid \$425,888 in property tax in 2018.

I am disclosing these figures to give you the significance of what just ten locations have on our State's economy throughout our interstate system with unrestricted exits versus a toll road that force traffic to reach their destination without stopping. If you don't believe me then think of your trips between Topeka to Kansas City or Topeka to Wichita. Are there privately-owned hotels, restaurants and or major travel plaza's located at Lawrence, Emporia, Eldorado exits or anyplace in between these Cities? When is the last time you exited at one of these cities just to grab a burger or fill up with gas? A toll road purely becomes a method to get from point A to B eliminating commerce on the way except at predetermined turnpike facilities.

For the past 56 years my family has made significant investments, provided good jobs and commerce to rural communities dependent upon unrestricted exits along major routes in the State of Kansas. In the past two years 24-7 Travel Stores invested \$4,500,000 in McPherson, KS and \$4,500,000 in Abilene, Kansas adding over 75 jobs for the two communities. In the next three years 24-7 Travel Stores plan to renew our investments in Russell, Colby and Goodland, Kansas. More toll roads will limit the third generation of 24-7 Travel Stores expansion opportunities within the State of Kansas.

In addition, to reducing the opportunity for commerce in communities along a toll route; tolling also is double taxation and wastes up to 30 cents of every dollar toward collection and administration costs. Why do we need more government managing toll roads when fuel taxes are far more efficient in funding our roads?

Respectfully,
Mark Augustine
President of Triplett, Inc.