

**Written Statement to the
Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation
by Lyle Butler, President/CEO
Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce
Opposing SB 222 and 223
March 9, 2017**

Chair Tyson, and members of the Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation, my name is Lyle Butler and I serve as the President and CEO of the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce. On behalf of the Chamber, I provide you with this written statement opposing SB 222 and 223.

Workforce readiness is critical for advancing economic development in the region. The Chamber supports initiatives that will aid in recruiting, developing and maintaining a quality workforce to meet employer needs within the region.

Local and state economic development depends on a balanced and competitive business environment. Efforts should be made at the state level to ensure that economic development incentive programs remain up-to-date with industry needs while engaging the local community to share in the cost of the investment. Economic development programs should also be free of administrative fees that create barriers for entry into the program. The Chamber supports the position that designated economic development funds are to be used for projects that create new jobs and/or retain existing primary sector jobs in the community while enhancing the local economy.

Regarding SB 223, the State of Kansas should not be discouraging companies that desire to relocate into Kansas, regardless of their distance from a community or state line. Similarly, businesses already located in the state should not be disadvantaged for seeking to expand and retain workers, especially if being incentivized by another state for relocating in that state.

In Manhattan, a company with 16 employees was looking to potentially relocate to the State of Minnesota. By utilizing PEAK incentives, this company expanded in Manhattan, KS, and hired nine additional employees. Their production volume grew by 40-percent and they are now exporting their product to 17 states and Puerto Rico, and internationally to Chile.

The Chamber cannot support efforts which erode or halt (temporarily or permanently) the ability to attract and retain quality jobs and employees to our region or state. Please oppose SB 222 and 223, should it come to a committee vote.