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Kansas Contractors Association

Senate Ways & Means Committee
January 24, 2018
SB 285

Chair McGinn and members of the committee,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of The Kansas Contractors Association in support of Senate Bill 285.

Transportation is an important industry in Kansas. The Federal Highway Administration estimates for each dollar spent on infrastructure investments, more than \$5.20 is gained in economic benefit.

Infrastructure investments not only support the transportation industry and the jobs contractors and suppliers provide, but also important economic growth for Kansas. In many Kansas towns where our contractors are located, they are the largest employer in the community. These employees purchase homes, eat in local restaurants, support local charities, and shop in local stores. We also know industries are attracted to regions that support a strong and quality infrastructure.

When infrastructure investments are not made, the reverse is true. Our industry loses our workforce and the state loses taxpayers as our employees move to where the jobs are. Businesses leave to where the commerce is.

Like most businesses, the transportation industry depends largely on stability and that's not the system that contractors are currently working under in Kansas. In fact, many highway contractors are seeking work outside of Kansas due to a lack of projects here in the state.

I am not standing before you today to rehash the recent history of diversions from KDOT to fund general government. I stand before you today, because the KCA believes it is time to change the course in Kansas and begin the discussions about creating a transportation vision for Kansas and the infrastructure needs of our state.

Instead of discussing the diversion of over \$2 billion dollars from transportation, let's talk about how the Kansas transportation industry can grow the Kansas economy by understanding the needs of the state, how we fund another highway program and create a vision for the transportation future of Kansas.

This may require hard conversations about State General Fund and State Highway fund expenditures. Identifying and protecting appropriate funding for infrastructure should be an important goal of the joint committee. We believe the transportation joint committee proposed in this bill represents an opportunity to develop a plan to address the remaining projects in T-WORKS, the emerging safety needs we hear from Kansas communities, and to discuss the modernization and expansion needs of the Kansas highway system.

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This is important work that will engage local communities, interested Kansans and people dedicated to creating a vision of economic growth for Kansas. The industry stands ready to work alongside legislators to build a vision for the state's transportation system that Kansans can all be proud of.

Again, I thank you for allowing me to speak today and I encourage you to vote YES on SB 285.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael White". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Michael White
Executive Director
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