



SB 487 Support

Written Testimony submitted to the
Senate Ways and Means Committee

Vince Frye, President
Downtown Topeka, Inc.

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Madame Chair and Members of the Committee:

Downtown Topeka, Inc. (DTI), supports Senate Bill 487, which authorizes the Department of Administration to issue bonds to renovate the Docking state office building and construct and equip a Department of Health and Environment laboratory in downtown Topeka.

DTI is part of a larger group called the Greater Topeka Partnership which supports the enhancement of economic development and quality of life in Topeka & Shawnee County. DTI's focus is Along with its partner agencies, the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce, GO Topeka and Visit Topeka, DTI works to ensure Topeka's downtown is the center of a thriving regional economy through recruiting, retaining and engaging commercial, cultural and residential opportunities.

The Board of Directors of DTI encourages the legislature to explore the multiple options available to it for the possible rehabilitation of the Docking State Office Building. The Docking building, whether fully rehabilitated or reconfigured in some way, can serve as a doorway to the City of Topeka and the State of Kansas, bringing employees, visitors, and respected officials from all over to our community. Downtown Topeka offers these employees and visitors a vibrant array of restaurants, shopping and nightlife, which will assist in recruitment and the overall experience of working for the State of Kansas.

DTI's goals include maximizing the number of current and new state employees in downtown and the Docking Building can certainly be an asset in that regard. Importantly, though, DTI urges the legislature to take into account the numerous privately-owned downtown buildings in which the State leases space and to work to minimize any cancellation of those leases. A balance can and should be struck between state utilization



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of owned and leased office spaces such that the downtown environment continues to thrive and serve as a valuable tool for recruiting state employees.

In this regard, DTI is highly supportive of relocating the KDHE lab and a conference center in downtown as well as other amenities in the Docking State Office Building that would complement the ongoing revitalization of Downtown Topeka.

For all of the above reasons, we urge you to support Senate Bill 487.

Contact:
Vince Frye, President
Downtown Topeka, Inc.
(785) 215-8657 ▪ vince.frye@topekapartnership.com