



February 16, 2016

RE: Proponent of HB 2605

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Transportation Committee I would like to thank you for allowing me to express on behalf of the Kansas Turnpike Authority (KTA) our support for HB 2605.

The KTA has heard from our customers that there is a desire to move away from gated electronic lanes. However, gates prevent the electronic lanes from being used by those who don't have transponders. We understand our customers' expectations have changed as they travel and experience other states' toll facilities. We are working hard to meet these new expectations while making the changes at a pace that is good for Kansans.

The KTA very much wants to provide the safe and efficient travel experience that our customers desire while still collecting the user fees that ultimately pay to support maintenance and improvements to the system. We want to do that in a way that is fiscally responsible so that we don't have to pass huge rate increases along to customers who are paying their tolls today.

KTA is considering a new model for the three high traffic terminals that currently sit on the mainline plazas; Eastern Terminal near Bonner Springs, East Topeka, and Southern Terminal near the Oklahoma border. We are evaluating the transition at these locations because this is where we can make the biggest safety and efficiency enhancements for our customers. We will continue to evaluate any new plazas on a case by case basis.

In Kansas we have the distinct benefit of being able to rely on gathering input and information from the other tolling agencies who have already completed transitions to gateless systems. Most other agencies; including Texas, Colorado, and Oklahoma (for a complete list of states with existing statutory authority to withhold registrations please see attached) who already have this statutory right in place, have resoundingly told us that having the ability to collect from those few customers who will intentionally try to not pay is important before you begin the transition. This will ensure that the KTA won't need to collect more from those that are playing by the rules, allowing us to keep tolls low for everyone who travels the system.

HB 2605 allows us to ensure collection methods by allowing the ability for the KTA to advise the Kansas Department of Revenue not to renew or register a vehicle to those vehicles which are registered to owners who have failed to pay their outstanding tolls. A process chart outlining what would happen for Kansas customers is attached.

This legislation also allows that the KTA will be able to issue notices to those that travel on the all electronic lanes without an electronic account. This will allow us to keep the flow of traffic moving in instances where someone is traveling in an all electronic lane. Secondly, this will allow the KTA to assess fees and costs for customers who repeatedly attempt to get into an all electronic lane without paying tolls. This bill will also allow the KTA to investigate and make final determinations when registered owners contest tolls and fines. This bill ensures that customers who want to contest their assessed toll have an avenue to do so through a documented process that has worked well for other states such as Oklahoma.

Again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today in support of HB 2605 and I would be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Thank you.  
Steve Hewitt  
Chief Executive Officer  
Kansas Turnpike Authority