



KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES  
TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 2644  
February 18, 2016

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

The Kansas Association of Counties stands in opposition to HB 2644, based on the level of damage that will be done to county roads under this legislation.

KAC will defer to the County Highway Officials Association, which represents the experts on county roads – the county engineers and road supervisors. Kansas counties own and maintain 82% of the roads and 77% of the bridges in Kansas.

The purpose for codifying truck weights in statute is to protect roads and bridges from damage caused by heavy loads. The increases in truck weights proposed under HB 2644 will damage roads, bridges and culverts, and thus increase the costs of maintenance by counties, which is ultimately passed on to county taxpayers.

County roads are constructed differently from state roads, and have thinner pavements. Aside from the damage to roads, we are concerned about damage to bridges. Counties see collapsed timber bridges/culverts during harvest season already. The Kansas Highway Officials note that this legislation would require us to inspect 12,377 county bridges to determine if they need new load limit signs, with that analysis running about \$30 million. Posting new load limit signs on an estimated 3,000 bridges will cost \$1.5 million.

It should be noted that counties are already cutting back road maintenance due to budget constraints. If counties cannot afford to maintain paved roads, they are converted to gravel roads. Many counties have permanently closed bridges, and if we cannot afford to maintain or inspect them, they will be closed. I will remind you that the Kansas legislature adopted a property tax lid that limits the amount of revenues that a county can raise using property taxes.

In closing, we ask that you hold HB 2644 in committee, and not pass it out. I would be happy to answer questions.

Melissa Wangemann, General Counsel