



February 7, 2024

Testimony on SB 349

The City of Wichita strongly supports expanding the availability of passenger rail service in our state. Doing so will ensure that we are better able to connect communities and provide affordable and efficient transportation options for residents and visitors alike and keep Kansas competitive with regional states. The benefits of expanding passenger rail are numerous and include:

Economic Development: Enhanced rail connectivity stimulates economic development by attracting businesses, increasing tourism, and creating job opportunities in communities along rail corridors. Studies have consistently shown that investment in rail infrastructure yields significant returns on investment and spurs local economic growth.

Transportation Equity: Access to reliable and affordable transportation is essential for ensuring equity and social mobility. Passenger rail service provides a lifeline for individuals and families who may not have access to private vehicles or affordable air travel. By expanding rail service, we can ensure that all Kansans have access to safe, convenient, and affordable transportation options, and conversely, provide more options for others to come and visit our state.

Regional Connectivity: A robust passenger rail network connects urban and rural areas alike, fostering regional cooperation and collaboration. Improved connectivity facilitates business travel, enhances access to healthcare and educational institutions, and strengthens ties between communities across the state.

Quality of Life: Passenger rail service enhances quality of life by reducing travel times, stress and dependency on automobiles. By offering an alternative to long-distance driving and air travel, rail service provides travelers with a more comfortable, enjoyable, and productive travel experience.

We urge our partners in the Kansas legislature to prioritize the expansion of passenger rail service in Kansas as a strategic investment in our state's future. By modernizing and expanding our rail infrastructure, we can drive economic growth, protect the environment, promote equity and enhance the overall well-being of our Kansas communities.

Thank you for considering my testimony and for your dedication to advancing the interests of the people of Kansas. I stand ready to support efforts to expand passenger rail service and look forward to the positive impact it will have on our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Lily Wu'.

Lily Wu
Mayor, City of Wichita