

March 10, 2025

House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee
Proponent Testimony for HB 2346
Presented by: Fred L. Merrill, Jr.
3/11/2025

Chairman Tarwater and House Commerce committee members,
I am Fred L. Merrill, Jr, on behalf of Prairiefire in support of HB 2346 (with new draft amendment language).

I am the Developer of Prairiefire, which is a mixed use development of retail, office, residential and the Museum at Prairiefire, soon to be exhibiting the College Baseball Hall of Fame in Overland Park.

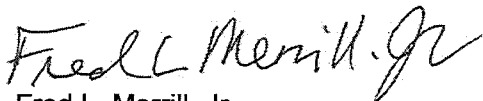
Prairiefire supports HB2346. The passing of this legislation will allow Kansas communities like Overland Park to compete to host economically impactful sporting events and drive out of state visitation through sports tourism. Our community has the infrastructure and facilities to compete and host regional and national sporting events. This sports tourism legislation will allow us to be competitive.

1. Kansas is losing out on sports tourism dollars.
2. The state of Kansas is at a competitive disadvantage. Our neighboring states and 23 others across the United States have dedicated sports tourism funds that help them attract major sports events, driving millions in economic impact.
3. Without a similar fund, Kansas is missing key opportunities to bring revenue to the state, fill hotel rooms, and support local businesses.

A dedicated Kansas sports tourism grant program means more major sporting events, more out of state visitors, and more out of state dollars spent in Kansas. It allows communities to attract higher quality sporting competitions, national tournaments, and championship events that drive economic impact and enhance Kansas reputation as a premier sports destination.

Prairiefire submits this testimony as an enthusiastic endorsement of House Bill 2346 and its new language and respectfully asks that this bill be passed out of committee and submitted for full approval of the House of Representatives.

Respectfully,



Fred L. Merrill, Jr.
Developer of Prairiefire