

**Written Testimony Before the Kansas Senate Ways & Means Committee
In Support of Senate Bill 86 (SB86) and passenger rail extension in Kansas
Presented by Martin Rivarola, Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) - 2/6/2025**

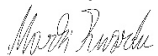
Chairperson Billiger, Vice Chair Claeys, Ranking Member Pettey and members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee, Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 86 (SB86). MARC serves as the Council of Governments and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the bi-state Kansas City region, including Wyandotte, Johnson, Leavenworth and Miami counties in Kansas. MARC is governed by a board of local elected officials, who have adopted plans and policies that broadly support investments in multi-modal transportation, including public transit, active transportation, ports, freight movement, and passenger rail. We **strongly support SB86**, which provides crucial financial resources for passenger rail extension in Kansas.

As the Kansas City region's long-range metropolitan plan, [Connected KC 2050](#), indicates, we believe expansion of this critical infrastructure will bring benefits to our metropolitan area. Any extension of passenger rail services would:

- Provide another mode of travel for our residents, of particular importance to seniors, students, and workers without access to a vehicle. New contemplated services connecting with Southwest Chief at Newton, for example, would link Kansas City to Wichita and other important metropolitan areas further south in OK and TX.
- Increase potential for reduction of highway congestion by shifting trips to passenger rail.
- Offer a more environmentally-friendly alternative to car and air travel.
- Position our state more favorably as we compete for future economic development initiatives and major events such as conventions and sporting events (example: world cup in 2026).

We strongly support attempts to expand funding for multi-modal transportation as provided by SB86. We urge this committee to support this initiative for the benefit of all Kansans.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



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[Connected KC 2050](#) encourages efforts to “enhance our region’s connections by supporting improvements to intercity passenger and freight transportation facilities and services that connect our region to domestic and international markets.” Our plan further [indicates](#):

“An efficient transportation network with strong intercity connections helps promote the economic vitality of the region by providing businesses with access to external markets and attracting visitors to the region..... Passenger rail has the largest gaps in service of all of the travel modes reviewed.... Kansas City has no passenger rail connectivity to other growing metropolitan areas such as... Oklahoma City.... connectivity to and between other Midwest/Great Plains areas would be beneficial.”