

February 16, 2012

The Honorable Richard Carlson
Chairman, House Taxation Committee

Mr. Chairman and honorable committee members. My name is Jack Taylor from Liberal, Kansas and I'm here representing Liberal and S.P.I.R.I.T. (Southwest Passage Initiative for Regional & Interstate Transportation) the organization which promotes the upgrade of U.S. Highway 54 from Wichita, Kansas to El Paso, Texas.

In the fall of 2011, the Legislature passed and provided funding for a multi-year Transportation Bill. It would include a 4/10 cent state sales tax which would provide part of the funding for the new Bill. Governor Brownback and Secretary Miller made several appearances throughout the State announcing the transportation projects which would be done by KDOT over the next ten years with these funds.

Now, once again, there seems to be a plan to take funds from the T-WORKS program to be used for "buying down state income tax rates." This would be in addition to the \$200 million already taken from the fund in 2011. The reality is this would impede KDOT's ability to deliver the projects which the Governor and the KDOT Secretary promised.

We in Southwest Kansas once again fear that projects which have been put on hold for many years because of money previously being taken from transportation to fill the state budget gaps would once again be in jeopardy. This year there is no state budget gap, but the money you allocated for T-WORKS is being raided to support an income tax plan.

In November, then-KDOT Secretary Deb Miller said in "If we continue to lose money, we're going to have to eliminate projects." T-WORKS will provide thousands of construction jobs across the State of Kansas as these projects are being done, and of course all the construction workers will be spending money in the towns near the job site providing a big boost to the local and state tax revenues.

The Transportation Plan has enormous support State-wide. The Economic Development of the towns and counties across Kansas depend heavily on good transportation infrastructure. We cannot afford to curtail progress and deny jobs now.

Please reconsider this plan which would prevent KDOT from delivering the projects we so badly need and depend on.

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