



Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce

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Re: House Bill 2747

The Honorable Richard Carlson, Chairman, House Taxation Committee, February 16, 2012

The Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce joins with Economic Lifelines and hundreds of other local Kansas communities in opposition to HB 2747. Former Kansas Transportation Secretary Deb Miller warned us last November that continued raids on transportation revenue stream would jeopardize KDOT'S obligations under the program. "This is over" Miller is quoted as saying. "it's just not possible to take more from this program and then go back and credibly say to the public we're still going to do what was promised." She added, "If we continue to lose money, we're going to have to eliminate projects. Period." Miller stated that over the past several years, the legislature has diverted \$1.4billion from transportation to other functions of government, treating the highway fund as a piggy bank. "Renewal by Kansas government of action to peel away highway appropriations will come with consequences." Miller said.

Governor Sam Brownback has said that "the state should seek alternatives to another massive sweep of K-DOT in preparing a budget blueprint for the upcoming fiscal year." Senate President Steve Morris said he would oppose removal of future funding from KDOT in the fiscal year 2013 budget. "I'm against taking more, Morris said. "Highway plans are important in economic development and quality of life. We've got to have those projects go forward." Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley said the current 10-year highway program, left unaltered in budget or scope, would create an estimated 175,000 temporary or permanent jobs. There's no better economic development than repairing roads, bridges and highways,' Hensley said. 'There's no question we've raided the highway fund too many times. We need to stop doing that.' Economic Development needs long term stable policy. This seems too much like the Federal Government that planed to fund a bio-lab in Manhattan for years and now don't.

Previously money has been taken from transportation to fill state budget gaps. This year **there is no state budget gap. The sales tax money allocated for T-WORKS is being raided to support an income tax plan.** The bill would not allow for the 4/10 cent transfer into KDOT in FY 14 and FY 15 to fund T-WORKS. **The reality is that the sales tax revenue is frozen,** which impedes K-DOT'S ability to deliver projects as scheduled.

REGIONAL PROJECT Included in the T-WORKS projects is the 13 mile super two K-96 diagonal from NW of Hutchinson to Sterling. In 2009 KDOT District 5 adopted this section of K-96 as its top priority and undertook extensive route analysis and planning. These 13 miles are the next logical extension of KDOT's major corridor modernization effort involving US 400/K-96 in SE Kansas, the K-96 by-pass around Wichita, the K-96 expressway from Wichita to Hutchinson and the K-96 Bob Dole bypass around Hutchinson.

There is a great deal at stake here for our region with the K-96 - Sterling project along with hundreds of other approved projects that Kansas cities and counties have been promised through T-WORKS. Now is not the time to go back on these commitments that have been made. We urge your strong opposition to HB 2747. Thank you for your time.