

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Steve Huebert at 3:30 p.m. on March 8, 2011, in Room 144-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Reed Holwegner, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Eunice Peters, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Florence Deeter, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Senator Pat Apple, District 12, Louisburg, Kansas
Joseph Hall and Ron Nickelson, Representing the Sugar Lake Community {Written Only}
Joe Erskine, Deputy Secretary of Finance and Administration, Kansas Department of Transportation
Matt Hickam, Hickam Public Affairs, Watco Companies, Pittsburg, Kansas
Ron Seeber, Vice President, Government Affairs, Kansas Grain & Feed Association {Written Only}
Bob Boaldin, Chairman, Western Kansas Development Organization {Written Only}

Others attending:

See attached list.

Staff Eunice Peters distributed to committee members a memorandum in response to questions posed in the previous meeting ([Attachment 1](#)).

Hearing On: SB 150 – Cities; incorporation; number of residents.

The Chairman opened the meeting on **SB 150**. Staff Eunice Peters briefed the committee on the bill, stating that it contains language to reduce to a minimum of 250 the number of persons living in an area seeking eligibility for incorporation as a city. She noted there was outdated language regarding voter registration documents and signatures on petitions of request for incorporation of a city.

Senator Pat Apple, District 12, Louisburg, Kansas, spoke as a proponent of **SB 150**, saying it simply seeks to lower the threshold of population for a community choosing to become a city ([Attachment 2](#)). He noted the importance of historical events that have occurred in the area near Mound City, Kansas. Senator Apple said that Sugar Valley, with a population of 267, would like to be part of that city.

In answer to questions, Senator Apple said no opponents gave testimony when the bill was heard in the Senate Committee on Local Government. Senator Apple commented further, stating that the land was platted early in 1970. He submitted copies of the proponent's testimony to the Senate committee-- Joseph Hall and Ron Nickelson, representatives from the Sugar Lake Community ([Attachment 3](#)).

The Chairman closed the hearing on **SB 150**.

Hearing On: SB – 119 Rail Service Improvement program loans and grants.

The Chairman opened the hearing on **SB 119**. Staff Eunice Peters said the bill, as amended, would allow cities and counties to enter into loan or grant agreements with the Secretary of Transportation for the purpose of obtaining rail service improvement funds. She noted that the amount of loans granted to cities and counties would be excluded from their bonded indebtedness limitations.

Joe Erskine, Deputy Secretary of Finance and Administration, Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), explained that the agency operates a Rail Service Improvement Loan program (RSIL), which allows loans and grants to be given to qualified entities for rail improvement to cities, counties and industrial parks ([Attachment 4](#)). He noted that currently cities and counties have difficulty obtaining loans and grants due to lack of the required collateral. Mr. Erskine said the bill is designed to make the RSIL program available to cities and counties needing assistance and requested that the committee consider the bill favorable for passage.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the House Elections Committee at 3:30 p.m. on March 8, 2011, in Room 144-S of the Capitol. Matt Hickam, Hickam Public Affairs, Watco Companies, Pittsburg, Kansas, spoke as a proponent of **SB 119**, saying that Watco is the owner of Watco Transportation Services and is the largest privately-held short line railroad company in the United States (Attachment 5). He said rail service is very important to the economic stability of small communities. Mr. Hickam reported that the company has more than 1,400 miles of track in southeast Kansas, western Kansas and Wyandotte County. He requested the committee to consider the bill favorable for passage.

Ron Seeber, Vice President, Government Affairs, Kansas Grain & Feed Association submitted written testimony in support of **SB 119** (Attachment 6).

Bob Boaldin, Chairman, Western Kansas Development Organization, submitted written testimony in support of **SB 119** (Attachment 7).

Responding to a question, Staff Eunice Peters said the change of amendment in the bill is in on page 3, lines 4 and 5, in reference to qualified entities entering into an agreement-- “and in coordination with the railroad providing service.”

The Chairman closed the meeting on **SB 119**.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15. The next meeting is scheduled for March 10, 2011.