

MINUTES OF THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Les Donovan at 8:30 a.m. on January 25, 2001 in Room 245-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Pugh

Committee staff present: Hank Avila, Legislative Research Department
Bruce Kinzie, Revisor of Statutes
Marian F. Holeman, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Michael L. Johnston, Kansas Turnpike Authority
Tom Whitaker, KS Motor Carriers Assn.

Others attending: See attached list

Overview of Kansas Turnpike Authority

Chairman Donovan welcomed all the guests at the meeting and extended congratulations to Bill Whim for his 49 years and five million miles of accident-free commercial driving. He introduced Mike Johnston, President/CEO Kansas Turnpike Authority. Mr. Johnston also congratulated Mr. Whim for his excellent Turnpike driving record.

Members received information on the development of the turnpike conception and enabling legislation. President Johnston's overview covered the period from construction to the present (Attachment 1). The Electronic Toll Collection K-Tag Program cost about ten million dollars to initiate and has been far more successful than originally anticipated. Members discussed continued operations of toll collectors and the problems involved in installing mechanical ticket issuing devices and/or "bucket" collecting devices.

Approximately 50% of the Turnpike users are non-state residents. Many of these customers require services that can only be provided by people. The possibility of constructing additional toll roads within the state at this time would be very difficult. For one thing, the financing framework available in the 50's would not work in today's market. For example, making Highway 54 West a toll road with the sparse population and the need for farmers to have frequent access and egress to that highway would make it a cost prohibitive project.

The subject of turning the Turnpike over to the state was raised. Mr. Johnston advised that the 1953 enabling legislation did not mandate turning the toll road over to the state. The stated condition was that it could be returned to KDOT when it is debt free and in good condition. It also authorized the Secretary to continue to collect tolls. It costs approximately 65 million dollars annually to operate the turnpike and Kansas taxpayers would have to pick up this cost. Presently, at least half of this revenue is paid by non-Kansans.

Approval of minutes

Senator Salmans moved to approve minutes of the January 24, 2001 meeting. Senator Jackson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Announcements

Tom Whitaker, Executive Director, Kansas Motor Carriers Association, announced planned program to honor Bill Whim, National Truck Driver of the year, and other activities association with Kansas Trucking Industry Day at the Capitol and invited everyone to participate in these activities. He also advised that Kansas has had three of the last five year's National Truck Driver of the year.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2001.

CONTINUATION SHEET