

STATE OF KANSAS

TOM SLOAN
REPRESENTATIVE, 45TH DISTRICT
DOUGLAS COUNTY

STATE CAPITOL, 452-S
300 SW 10TH AVENUE
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
(785) 296-7632
1-800-432-3924

772 HWY 40
LAWRENCE, KANSAS 66049-4174
(785) 841-1526
tom.sloan@house.ks.gov



TOPEKA

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RESOURCES
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Testimony on HB 2529 – Vehicle Registration Fees

House Transportation Committee
February 17, 2016

Mr. Chairman, Committee Members: For several years you have heard me raise the issue of equitable support for funding the state highway system. In our current funding system based on drivers paying motor fuel taxes, drivers of electric, hybrid, and other non-petroleum fueled vehicles do not pay their appropriate share to maintain our State's roads and bridges.

Other states are confronting this issue in a variety of ways. Some are attempting to track vehicle miles driven and taxing vehicle owners accordingly. I find such an approach to be a "Big Brother" intrusion into personal privacy. For other states, increases in vehicle registration fees are preferred.

HB 2529 represents an effort to responsibly balance State Highway funding equity in a manner that is fair to all vehicle owners and drivers. The proposed increase in vehicle registration fees reflects that balance. Those vehicles that do not use motor fuels will pay a higher vehicle registration fee than those dual-fuel hybrid vehicles; and those vehicle owners will pay higher fees than owners of hydro-carbon-based fuel vehicles.

The proposed fees reflect two factors: a) An approximation of what drivers pay in motor fuel taxes, and b) An approximation of what other states selecting this policy deem appropriate.

Committee Members, in my mind this is an equity issue in that all users of our State's highway system should pay their fair share to maintain and improve the system. I look forward to your questions and your support of HB 2529.