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Legislative Testimony

by the

Kansas Motor Carriers Association

Commenting on House Bill No. 2085

Presented before

Senate Ways and Means Committee

Senator Ty Masterson, Chairman

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SENATE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE:

I am Tom Whitaker, executive director of the Kansas Motor Carriers Association. I appear here this morning representing our 950 member companies and the Kansas trucking industry to comment on the provisions of House Bill No. 2085.

During the 2013 Session of the Kansas Legislature, KMCA vigorously opposed House Bill No. 2234 which set up a new structure for the relationship between the Kansas Department of Transportation and the Kansas Turnpike Authority. KMCA had two major concerns. First, we were concerned that the Administration would siphon off revenue from the Turnpike for other state operations, and second, we just couldn't see changing a business model that had worked well for sixty years. KDOT insisted there would be "savings" from this new partnership. Indeed, the Secretary of Transportation has reported those savings to this Committee. While some of the savings are from long term restructuring of bonds, there have been savings.

KMCA was apprehensive of the KDOT/KTA relationship, but there are positives. KDOT has included KTA staff and resources in their efforts to have a statewide view of freight movement needs throughout Kansas. This is evident with the participation of the KTA in the Kansas Freight Advisory Committee. KMCA members were pleased to participate in this Committee along with other freight transportation modes and stakeholders. In addition, KMCA has partnered with KDOT and KTA surveying our members regarding truck parking issues and efforts to get trucks coming from western Kansas traveling to northeast Kansas, to use the Turnpike at Wichita instead of U.S. Highway 50 to Interstate 35 at Emporia.

KMCA also has worked with the KTA on interoperability between KTA and trucking transponder vendors PrePass and Bestpass to allow just one transponder to be used for toll collection throughout the United States. We have been informed interoperability for the trucking industry is just a few short months away.

With all of this said, KMCA will not oppose the removal of the KDOT/KTA sunset provision, and will continue to work with and watch over Turnpike operations in Kansas. Mr. Chairman, we appreciate being allowed to comment on HB 2085. We would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have.

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