



KANSAS SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS
A State Society of the National Society of Professional Engineers

To: Senate Ways & Means Committee
From: Travis Stryker, PE; Kansas Professional Society of Engineers
Date: March 8, 2016
Re: Opposition to SB 463

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,
Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on Senate Bill 463.

The Kansas Society of Professional Engineers (KSPE) represents the individual licensed engineers across the state. For over 100 years, KSPE has worked to promote engineering by delivering professional development services, encouraging licensure, in addition to advocating legislation and public policy for the betterment of human welfare and the industry.

We understand the budget concerns of our state and appreciate the innovative approaches to balance the budget. However, our organization has enormous concerns with SB 463 for two reasons.

SB 463 as written jeopardizes the future of the KanGrow Engineering Fund by removing its funding mechanism and its set appropriation level. In 2011, the KanGrow Engineering Fund was created through the University Engineering Investment Act to encourage more college students to become professional engineers. This is a ten-year program that provides support to Kansas State University, University of Kansas and Wichita State University. \$10.5 million from the Expanded Lottery Act Revenue Funds (ELARF) is distributed each year equally between the three universities with a dollar for dollar matching program from non-state sources.

Since the program's inception, each of the three engineering schools have seen a direct increase in the number of engineer major students and graduates each year. The program is administered by the Department of Commerce. Every year, the Kansas Board of Regents presents an update to the House and Senate Commerce committees illustrating the program's success.

SB 463 abolishes the Expanded Lottery Act Revenue Fund, which serves as the funding mechanism for KanGrow. The KanGrow statutes remain in place in the bill although there is no set funding level.

It is essential Kansas has programs in place to create and retain a professional workforce. The engineering program plays a substantial part in the future of our state.

Our second concern is the removal of the funding mechanism for the State Highway Fund through the 16.26% of the state sales tax. The revenue for the portion of the sales tax is the life stream of the State Highway Fund. Given the hundreds of millions transferred from KDOT in recent years, we feel this bill would leave a daunting impact on the future of the state's infrastructure.

We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to voice our concerns on this matter.