

Testimony
Regarding HB 2237
Before the House Taxation Committee
February 7, 2017

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Taxation Committee: I am Bob Totten, of the Kansas Contractors Association. I represent more than 230 companies involved in the construction of roads and bridges around the state. Our association has been testifying before various state legislative committees since 1923.

It has been a week since I told you but I am telling you once again, we are disappointed that much of KDOT's construction funds have been diverted over the past 7 years. The legislative Research Department indicates that with the governor's recommendation for 2018 and 2019, KDOT will have seen \$3.4 billion dollars removed from the \$ 8 Billion dollar T-Works program which was passed in 2010. This amounts to over 1 million dollars a day.

Today, we are lending our full support for a comprehensive solution to the budget problems that have been plaguing the state in the recent past. This proposal incorporated in HB 2237 is providing a road map for you to follow in making Kansas great again.

It restores a structural fix to our budget and gets us on the right track for the future.

Our organization is quite pleased this measure calls for an 11 cent increase in the gas tax as a quick fix to the highway program until sufficient revenues are put back into the state general fund.

You are all aware that if you passed a motor fuels tax today, the revenues generated from it would flow into KDOT's budget immediately. It would allow KDOT to restart the over 50 projects which have been suspended or delayed in the past 9 months.

As many of our members told you last week, the motor fuels tax is constitutionally protected. That means, it cannot be diverted to other units of government or for tax relief. It can only be used to fix the roads.

We do have road problems in Kansas. There have been various reports provided by the administration claiming the roads are in good shape but that data is dated and old.

But this week, the Federal Highway Administration said pavement conditions in 2015 for all arterials(which includes interstates) and collectors in Kansas(over 24,000 miles) indicates that 13 percent are in poor condition, 24 percent are in mediocre condition, 8 percent in fair condition and 56 percent in good condition. Is 56 percent of our roads being in good condition, ...good enough for you?

We are talking about the safety of our people traveling from one place to another. You can't travel safely if your roads and bridges are not in good condition. If your roads are not in good shape, you will face more potholes, weight listed bridges and other concerns when traveling.

Our legislative leaders need to turn the ship around and increase revenues to our state coffers and KDOT. This motor fuels tax along with other changes is a way to make it happen.

HB 2237 is a way to restore the quality of life to Kansans. We need good schools, good roads and we need to take care of people who can't take care of themselves.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my thoughts today. I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.