



Testimony of The Heavy Constructors Association of Greater Kansas City in Support of SB 285

Madame Chair and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of Senate Bill 285.

My name is Bridgette Williams, I am the Executive Director of the Heavy Constructors Association of The Greater Kansas City Area. The Association was founded 65 years ago and is a chapter of the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC). Our membership is comprised of general contractors in highway, bridge and municipal utility construction. Our association straddles the Kansas City Metro Area encompassing five counties in Missouri and Johnson and Wyandotte Counties in Kansas.

As one of the founding members of Economic Lifelines, the Heavy Constructors Association has worked with previous governors and legislatures on every Kansas statewide transportation funding program; in 1989, 1999 and 2010. We have been proud to be a part of those efforts that has seen Kansas go from some of the worst roads in the nation to some of the very best.

Unfortunately, I come before you today with concern that the progress we have made with our statewide transportation system is at peril. As you are aware, the financial problems of the state, has resulted in the diversion of over \$2.4 billion from the 2010 T-WORKS Program to fund other state services. Contrary to certain opinions, the T-WORKS Program did not have additional funds built into it. The diversion of transportation funds has delayed promised projects across the state and resulted in a decline in the level of annual maintenance of the existing system. This has both short-term as well as long-term consequences for us as a state, but what are they? What is the status of the 2010 T-Works Program? What

new road and bridge needs have arisen in the eight years since the 2010 Legislature enacted the program?

These are the important questions we believe that SB 285 would start to answer. SB 285 will provide needed information to the 2019 Legislature to make informed decisions in crafting policy concerning our statewide transportation system. Policy which addresses the needs for our citizens, businesses and the economic health of our state.

SB 285 would be the first step in a process that brings back thousands of good-paying, skilled construction jobs back to Kansas. Jobs which have gone to other states as funding for the current program has dropped. The construction company members of the Heavy Constructors have employed thousands of laborers, equipment operators, truck drivers, masons, ironworkers and carpenters directly on Kansas public works projects. These are skilled jobs paying \$50 and \$60 per hour. In addition, Kansas public road and bridge projects have supported hundreds of off-site workers in quarries, asphalt plants, cement and redi-mix plants, pipe suppliers, and minority and women owned business subcontractors as well as small businesses. Heavy and highway construction employment in the Kansas City area today, is close to the recession levels of 2008.

SB 285 takes the first step toward a renewed transportation program that would provide needed jobs to our industry and provide economic growth for our state.

I urge your yes vote on SB 285. Thank you.