



Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce
Support for SB 285, Taskforce & Planning for Future of Transportation
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
January 24, 2018

The KC Chamber, representing over 2,000 businesses in the greater Kansas City area, is pleased to provide this testimony in support of Senate Bill 285 to establish a taskforce to evaluate the Kansas transportation system, review funding needs and opportunities, and make recommendations to serve the state transportation system in the next 10 years.

Our members tell us every day that nothing affects economic opportunity and quality of life in the Kansas City region more than education and transportation. Our transportation system affects the safety and timeliness of our daily commute to work. It affects the ability of our businesses to attract a 21st century workforce and to get their products to market competitively. In short, transportation is one of the major drivers of the economy in the KC region and throughout the state. This is why, the KC Chamber, last week, announced its newest Big 5 Initiative is Transportation. This new regional improvement priority project will focus on regional transportation innovation and moving the workforce to jobs. The new Transportation Initiative also includes an innovative pilot program with Google to help cities and other jurisdictions make better informed decisions about the movement of people and goods by mapping flow, timing and mode of transportation.

While the KC Chamber embarks on its own bi-state transportation planning and Kansas begins to consider its transportation future, we believe it is important to point out that transportation leaders throughout our bistate metropolitan area have been three-year advocates of the national “Beyond Traffic” comprehensive study of major trends that will shape our nation’s transportation system over the next 30 years. The report (https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/BeyondTraffic_tagged_508_final.pdf) looks at broader trends, such as population growth and mobility patterns, increasing freight volume, as well as issues of economic opportunity, transportation funding, and emerging technologies, to identify the key transportation challenges that our country will face.

The KC Chamber is pleased to see SB 285 calling for the State to conduct a similar comprehensive study of the conditions, needs and opportunities that should shape our state’s transportation future. The Chamber encourages the State to look not only at current transportation needs, but to examine the future of mobility in Kansas including the opportunities created by emerging innovative technologies and smart infrastructure to improve transportation safety, speed and comfort and the economic vibrancy of the state. The Beyond Traffic report considered the following issues which might be valuable components of a Kansas study as well.

- **How we move** – America’s population is expected to grow by 70 million by 2045, and by 2050, three-quarters of Americans could live in eleven emerging megaregions.
- **How we move things** – U.S. freight volume is expected to increase by more than 40 percent, adding extra demand to our transportation networks.
- **How we move better** – Automation and robotics will affect all modes of transportation, improving infrastructure maintenance, travel safety, and enabling mainstream use of autonomous vehicles.
- **How we grow opportunity** – Middle- and low-income American households spend, on average, nearly 20 percent of their income on transportation and 40 percent on housing.
- **How we adapt** – Predicted rises in global temperatures and more frequent and intense storm events, could drastically affect highways, bridges, public transportation and waterways.

- **How we align decisions and dollars** – Gasoline-tax revenues have failed to keep up with transportation needs and could decline further as vehicle fuel efficiency improves.

The KC Chamber has had occasion in the past six months to communicate with leaders in Indiana and Massachusetts, who have helped pass innovative transportation plans looking to future growth, needs and emerging technologies. We think it is time for Kansas to do the same. And, there are already Kansas City area businesses working on smart transportation infrastructure such as sensors embedded in roads that communicate with traffic signals that adjust dynamically to match traffic volume, and highway pavement that recharges your electric car as it travels down the road. All of this could be valuable in a Kansas transportation plan.

Senate Bill 285 will provide Kansas with a significant opportunity to improve the mobility of people and goods, reduce traffic congestion and its associated costs and position the state as an innovation leader and “open for business.”

On behalf of the KC Chamber Board of Directors, we urge the committee and Kansas legislature to look favorably upon this legislation and are pleased to offer our resources and insights through our new Big 5 Transportation Innovation Initiative to assist the state in planning for the future of mobility in Kansas. Thank you for your consideration.

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