

STATE OF KANSAS



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Testimony as a Proponent - HB 2399
House Tax Committee
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Chairman Johnson and members of the committee,

I appear today to offer testimony in favor of HB 2399, which would extend a sales tax exemption for construction of the Gove County Airport for an additional five years. I supported the original exemption which was first passed into law in 2016. At that time, Gove County stood as one of the last counties in the state without an airport. The health care delivery community in Quinter is quite active, and serves a large service area, extending well outside the boundaries of Gove County. The need for an airport to supply air ambulance service was viewed as a critical need, and that's when the Gove County Healthcare Endowment Foundation Inc. proposed and advocated for construction of an airport when the city of Quinter and the county were unable to do so on their own.

The airport is now a reality, thanks in large part to that original sales tax exemption. However, some additional construction objectives are still awaiting completion. Papi lights must be installed to assist in landing. An entry sign to the airport is still lacking, and there is a need for a building to house restrooms and a break room for visiting pilots.

Please note that the owner of the facility is the healthcare foundation, which lacks taxing authority, unlike if the facility been a more conventional city- or county-owned airport. Note also that had it been constructed in that manner, the sales tax exemption would have been automatic. The foundation depends on contributions, grants, and donors for all funding, which explains the need for an extension of the exemption. The foundation only moves forward with an additional construction component when they have the funds in place.

I applaud the can-do spirit that the board of the foundation and their many supporters in the city and county have demonstrated. I urge your favorable consideration of their request for an extension, and I would be happy to stand for questions.