

City of McPherson

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February 14, 2020

City of McPherson Proponent Testimony for Senate Bill 375 for February 18, 2020
Senator Carolynn McGinn, Chairman, Ways and Means Committee.

Thank you Chairman for the opportunity to provide testimony to the Senate Ways and Means Committee in support of Senate Bill 375 for the FORWARD Transportation Program.

I want to commend Secretary Lorenz and her staff for the tremendous field work completed in analyzing the transportation environment in Kansas including ground, rail and air transportation. I attended several transportation district meetings where the citizens and local governmental entities stated the needs within the district. I am the chairman of Regional Economic Area Partnership (REAP) for multiple counties and cities in South Central Kansas crossing several KDOT Districts. The District meetings were able to hear projects that cross current district boundaries. It was important to look beyond these district boundaries as employers are recruiting employees on a regional basis. Our region takes in the Interstate 135 corridor from Wellington to Salina. The North Junction in Wichita and passenger rail are key priorities with significant employment benefits.

The FORWARD Transportation Program has good flexibility to solve health, safety, employment and travel time needs. The relook provision every two years helps all stakeholders to not get locked into a long term project that no longer meets the needs factors.

There is provision in the program for road, bridge, aircraft including unmanned aircraft and future passenger rail needs. U.S. Senator Jerry Moran has been our federal government champion. Sen. McGinn has been a State level champion. I believe we can stimulate growth in our economy and our population with this program.

The FORWARD Transportation Program will leverage partnerships with local communities by requiring more local match and local input to use our dollars wisely. It is usually good for all parties to have some "skin" in the game. The only concern would be if other State tax statutes limit local governmental entities from participating in well vetted projects because of the match requirement. If a match is possible at the local level, local government will be a willing partner.

Respectfully,

Thomas A. Brown
Mayor

Commissioner of Public Facilities

Gary L. Mehl

Commissioner of Public Works

Larry E. Wiens

Thomas A. Brown