



March 16, 2021

House Committee on Commerce
Written Testimony in Support of SB 124
Jim Zaleski, TIAK President

Chair Tarwater and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity today to submit testimony on behalf of the Travel Industry Association of Kansas (TIAK) in support of SB 124.

The Travel Industry Association of Kansas (TIAK) is a member association comprised of tourism and travel professionals from across our State. The industry is an independent economic driver, which historically adds \$7.3 billion to the Kansas economy and sustains more than 94,000 jobs in the state.

Many Kansas communities, large and small, have benefited from the STAR Bonds program by developing new attractions which draw tourists to their communities. Projects such as the Kansas Speedway in Kansas City, Flint Hills Discovery Center in Manhattan and the Boot Hill Museum in Dodge City are all examples of successful destination tourism attractions that, when coupled with strong retail districts, have brought excitement, media coverage, NEW visitors and jobs to our Kansas communities as well as NEW revenue to the state and local economies.

In addition, TIAK members appreciate the addition of the “visitation expectations” element for each proposal that requires a plan detailing how the number of visitors will be tracked and reported to the Secretary on a yearly basis. This provision will assure projects are aimed at attracting tourists and assist local communities with tracking the project’s impact on our communities.

TIAK is supportive of extending the STAR Bonds program and the inclusion of rural projects in SB 124. This will help an even greater number of communities in Kansas develop new attractions and draw in new visitors. TIAK urges your support and passage of SB 124.

Thank you for the opportunity submit comments and support SB 124.