



## DICKINSON COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

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Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee  
March 2, 2023  
SB 127

Dickinson County  
Support Testimony

Chairman Tyson and Committee Members,

Dickinson County is requesting the submittal of a quarter cent sales tax question to our voters. The sales tax funds would be used for the purpose to update our current 26 years of age radio system. A total of 18 staffed and volunteer services to include Fire, Law Enforcement, Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Management and City Government. All emergency responses begin with radio communications and require the ability to communicate over the 852 square miles in Dickinson County. In 2022 we received 45,024 calls for services of which 26,180 calls dispatched were for Law Enforcement, Fire and EMS.

This system has reached the end of its useful life and does not provide the coverage needed to support our first responders. Parts are no longer available, maintenance costs continually increase (over \$50,000 annually), technology needs have changed, our neighboring counties have upgraded and interoperability is critical.

Our current needs include reliable communications across the entire county, adding two tower sites in Abilene and Herington, technology upgrades with the ability to upgrade equipment as technology changes, increased coverage of our county and the entire state, networked with surrounding jurisdictions and the state to provide interoperability and fixed maintenance costs that can be budgeted each year.

The solution is to move to the state 800 system and replace all mobile and portable radios for the 350 appointed or volunteer responders and the two tower sites. The total estimated project costs are \$2,812,400. Two towers sites - \$1,370,800, mobile and portable radios - \$859,000 and 5 years of maintenance - \$582,600. If our citizens approved the quarter cent sales tax for 5 years the estimated revenue would generate \$657,000 a year or 3.3 million over the 5 years. The county would utilize a lease purchase agreement with local banks allowing us to purchase equipment now and pay over the 5 years. Without the sales tax revenue, we estimate it would take the county 40 years to set aside monies to upgrade to the system.

We ask for your support of SB 127.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

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