



# CITY OF TOPEKA

Councilwoman Karen Hiller  
City Hall, 215 SE 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 255  
Topeka, KS 66603

Tel: 785-368-3710  
[www.topeka.org](http://www.topeka.org)

To: Senate Committee on Transportation  
From: Karen Hiller, District 1 Councilwoman, City of Topeka  
Date: February 7, 2024  
Re: Proponent Testimony to SB 349

Thank you, Chairman Petersen for allowing the City of Topeka to testify today in favor of SB 349.

I am a Councilwomen for District 1 and I am in full support of establishing an intercity passenger rail service program to help connect Kansas with other states in the region and the nation. The City of Topeka has rich history connected to railroads and continues its support of rail travel. As a lifelong rail traveler, I can attest to train travel as being an excellent and timely option. Expanding travel options will increase visitors to the state and other less traveled destinations in the state, providing an economic benefit for Kansas. Additionally, providing a more accessible transportation option will be an economic benefit for the citizens of Kansas.

I am appreciative of the unique and prudent concept of the bill, using the wisdom of accumulating funds instead of borrowing to support this program. The intent is to set aside \$5M/year for 10 years, accumulating interest during the many long years of planning and construction KDOT has said it will take before operation can begin so that interest alone may pay for the operation of the train.

There is intense public and community interest in this infrastructure project, and it will impact many legislative districts through which it passes. I appreciate the support the state has provided so far for rail travel and the partnership of the state and local governments.

Please support advancing this bill out of committee so that Kansas may finally achieve this long sought-after expansion of passenger rail service.