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Office of the Mayor



Chair Senator Mike Petersen
Senate Transportation Committee
Hearing on SB 349 Passenger Rail Service Program (K.S.A. 75-5089, as amended)
Written Testimony is from the City of Shawnee, KS 2/7/2024

Dear Chair Petersen & Committee~

The City of Shawnee overwhelmingly supports SB 349, the operational support legislation for the Heartland Flyer Extension.

The entire State of Kansas has been waiting for 20 years to extend the Heartland Flyer north to Newton. That extension seamlessly connects the Dallas/Ft. Worth metro to Kansas City via the Southwest Chief. The City of Shawnee is well positioned to provide the most convenient passenger depot on the Southwest Chief line for the almost **One Million** residents of Johnson, Wyandotte, Miami and Leavenworth counties, as well as the travelers to our region. And this is just the beginning as the Heartland Flyer is first in the Kansas pipeline for rail expansion.

Secretary Calvin Reid determined in 2023 that legislation would be required for operational support of this train extension into Kansas. As you know, the Corridor ID Development Program in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requires that states prove they are capable of supporting a rail corridor before the federal government will provide final engineering and construction funds.

The concept of the bill is both unique and prudent. If passed, it will 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. Moreover, there is precedent within Kansas Statutes. Short Line Railroads and the state's airports have received \$5M and more every year, both of which are needed to maintain safety and compete with others across the country.

Now is the time to take the next step and pass operational support legislation, SB 349 for Kansans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mickey".

Mickey Sandifer

MAYOR, CITY OF SHAWNEE