



Kansas **Cable Telecommunications** Association

**House Judiciary Committee
Written Only Proponent Testimony – Substitute for SB219
May 2, 2019
John J. Federico, JD**

Representative Patton and Members of the Committee:

My name is John Federico and I serve as the President of the Kansas Cable Telecommunications Association. KCTA members provide advanced telecommunication services including video, voice and broadband to both urban and rural communities across Kansas. We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Substitute for SB219, pertaining to the scrap metal database.

Our member companies, including Cox Communications and Midco, have had significant issues with scrap metal theft over the last several years, and as recently as the past few weeks. Specifically, thieves have taken batteries that are in generator units scattered throughout local communities, remove any markings that may indicate they belong to a particular organization, and sell them to scrap metal dealers. When these generator units lose power, these batteries activate to ensure the consumer does not lose service. When these batteries are not in place, service is disrupted. This can be especially dangerous when service is cut to locations such as schools, hospitals and law enforcement facilities.

In addition to the loss of service and threat to public welfare and safety, the theft of these batteries is costing our companies a significant amount of resources. Cox alone has lost almost \$500,000 in the last two years in Wichita alone because of these stolen batteries.

Cox and other member companies have taken significant steps on their own to stop these thefts. They have installed security cameras, used decoy batteries with alarms, and have installed security bars to make it harder to remove the batteries. Despite this, the thefts continue to occur.

We believe that Sub for SB219 is a good solution to help solve our issues with these thefts while balancing the burden it places on scrap metal dealers. Specifically, the bill does the following:

- It reduces the scrap metal dealer registration fee by more than half; and,
- It moves the database to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation to be used as a tool for law enforcement officials and prosecutors. We believe having this database housed within the KBI maintains the integrity of the database as well.

Again, we ask for the Committee's support in helping our Kansas companies find a solution to this major issue.