



931 SW Henderson Rd.
Topeka, KS 66615

March 18, 2019
Testimony in support of SB 219
Senate Judiciary Committee
Testimony by Megan Bottenberg, Manager of Government Affairs

Chairman Wilborn and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today in support of SB 219.

Cox is the largest provider of broadband services in Kansas with over 8,900 miles of network. We also have invested more than \$78 million in infrastructure upgrades since 2010, and Cox continues to invest with our GIG and DOCS 3.1 deployment and plans to take fiber deeper in our network.

While our investment in our network is critical to the customer experience, we have faced a challenge over the past several years that has caused both operational and financial complications. In 2018, over 800 lead batteries were stolen from the Wichita area, and just this past month, three have been stolen from the Topeka area. Paul Truitt, our Vice President of Field Maintenance & Operations, is here to testify next about the impacts to Cox. In conversations with law enforcement investigating these thefts, the need for a statewide database for scrap metal sales became clear. The lead in our batteries is a regulated scrap metal. The database will help law enforcement and prosecutors track who is bringing in what to a dealer, build a strong prosecution case, and reduce theft.

Since the fall of 2018, we have worked closely with the City of Wichita, the Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Kansas Farm Bureau, as well as many others in the utility, law enforcement and agriculture industries. The challenge was the funding mechanism for the database and how this could be implemented without the burden being solely on scrap metal dealers. Earlier this year, we then worked with the Attorney General's Office and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, and many others to find a solution.

SB 219 is a fair piece of legislation that addresses the needs of law enforcement while balancing the burden it places on scrap metal dealers.

- It establishes a tonnage fee to fund the database through all of the users of the system.
- It reduces the scrap metal dealer registration fee by half.
- It moves the database to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

The amendments that the City of Wichita is proposing would reduce the amount of data to be collected and will make the database a simple one point of collection of information.

Cox supports the database as a tool for law enforcement to enforce the law and help us reduce scrap metal, and in our case battery, theft. We ask for your support of SB 219 and funding the statewide database. Thank you for your time.