



Senate Bill 375 Support

Written Testimony submitted to the
Senate Ways and Means Committee

Curtis Sneden, President
Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce

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Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of its nearly 1,000 members, the Topeka Chamber serves as the voice for the business community in Topeka and Shawnee County. The Chamber's top legislative priority in 2020 is to preserve and modernize the Polk Quincy Viaduct in downtown Topeka. Accordingly, the Topeka Chamber is keenly interested in the Kansas Department of Transportation's proposed FORWARD plan and is pleased to express its support for Senate Bill 375 which embodies that plan.

The Topeka Chamber followed closely the work last year of the Joint Legislative Vision Task Force and KDOT's local consults. A diverse team of local officials and business leaders convened and took every opportunity it could to make the case for inclusion of the Polk Quincy Viaduct project in whatever transportation plan is developed for the post-T-Works era.

The range of worthy transportation projects across Kansas is immense and, of course, the resources available to undertake those projects is limited. KDOT's proposal to consider every two years whether its efforts remain aligned with evolving community needs and technologies is a well-reasoned approach which will result over time in a statewide transportation system which is a conduit and driver of economic growth. We applaud the Department's innovative approach and appreciate its engagement with local stakeholders.

In recent years, the legislature's repeated diversion of portions of the state's highway fund to the State General Fund has all but crippled the Department's ability to arrest the deterioration of Kansas' once-proud highway system, let alone raise it to the level our economic aspirations demand. The Topeka Chamber appreciates the Governor's commitment to slow and eventually cease these diversions. Though fiscal and political realities may block the way, the Topeka Chamber is obliged to reassert its call that the



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diversions end with this year's budget, not a future one. Notwithstanding, our organization stands with KDOT in its efforts to move Kansas' transportation system forward.

We urge you to support Senate Bill 375.

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