

**G R E A T E R**  
O K L A H O M A C I T Y  
**C H A M B E R**

Senator Mike Petersen  
Chairman, Kansas Senate Transportation Committee  
Hearing on SB 349, Passenger Rail Service Program  
Re: Written Testimony from the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber

Dear Chairman Petersen & Members of the Committee:

I am submitting the following written testimony on behalf of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, a large economic development organization with over 3,000 members located in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Our Chamber has been a long-standing supporter of extending passenger rail service from Oklahoma City to Newton, KS and played a significant role in restoring service on the Heartland Flyer from Fort Worth, Texas to our community in 1999. It is a priority to see the full line restored to our friends in Kansas and across the national network. We applaud the partnership the State of Kansas has shown in working with your counterparts at the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to move the extension of the Heartland Flyer closer to becoming a reality.

Specifically, I am writing today in support of SB 349, operational support legislation for the Heartland Flyer extension. We understand the Corridor ID Development Program in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requires states to prove they are financially capable of supporting a rail corridor before the federal government will provide final engineering and construction funds. The concept of the bill to provide \$5 million in state funding over a 10-year period, so that interest alone can pay for train operations, is an elegant long-term financial solution. We anticipate a similar effort will likely be needed in Oklahoma and, additionally, would highlight our state's long-term financial partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation to operate the existing service as a model.

We understand that significant transportation objectives like the Heartland Flyer Extension cannot be achieved without genuine partnership. Our Chamber is enthusiastic about the opportunity to be further connected to your state through a rail link severed in 1979. In closing, we appreciate the leadership Kansas is showing as a partner in this endeavor and wish SB 349 every success as it is considered by the Senate Transportation Committee.

Please call on me or the Chamber if we can be of any assistance in these efforts.

Respectfully,



J. Derek Sparks  
Senior Manager of Government Relations  
Greater Oklahoma City Chamber