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HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON ENERGY
AND ENVIRONMENT

Testimony on HB 2455 – Highway Funding
Senate Assessment & Taxation Committee March 2, 2012
Rep. Tom Sloan

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee: When I introduced HB 2455 it called for plug-in electric vehicle owners to pay the equivalent of the motor fuel tax rate through the electric bill when they recharged the vehicles' batteries. The intent was to require owners of such vehicles to contribute to the maintenance of the state and local communities' highway system in the same manner that gasoline, diesel, and CNG-fueled vehicle owners do.

A majority of House Energy & Utilities Committee members expressed reservations about simply addressing plug-in electric vehicles, when hydrogen and other alternative fueled vehicles are on the horizon. They also expressed concern that electric-gasoline hybrid vehicle owners may not be paying their fair share to maintain the roads on which they drive. Finally, Committee members did not feel that legislators at this time should be determining whether a vehicle miles travelled (VMT) fee, vehicle weight assessment, continuation of the motor fuel tax, expansion of the state sales tax dedicated to highway funding, or some other mechanism will be most appropriate going forward.

As a result, Sub. for HB 2455 was developed, calling for the Department of Transportation to engage the public and appropriate stakeholders in discussions related to long-term funding strategies and proposals. The Department is to report to the Governor and Legislature by January 1, 2014 their findings and policy recommendations.

As vehicle mileage per gallon of fuel consumed increase and as alternative fuel vehicles become more prevalent, pressures to maintain the excellent highway system in Kansas will become more severe. With increased pressures from K-12, higher education, Medicaid, services for DD and other clientele, etc., the use of sales tax revenues to fund highways may, or may not, be appropriate and sustainable. Sub. for HB 2455 calls for the Department of Transportation, with relevant stakeholders, to assess our future needs, policy options, and to make a recommendation.

I regret that I am not present to respond to any questions you may have, but I am participating in the U.S. Department of Energy's Electricity Advisory Committee. As the only state legislator on the Committee, I feel an obligation to represent Kansas and state interests before the DOE. I will be in the State Capitol tomorrow (Wednesday, March 7th) and will be pleased to respond to any questions you may have. I also have attached the Supplemental Note on Sub. for HB 2455 to provide additional background information. Thank you for your consideration of Sub. for HB 2455.

Sn. Assmnt & Tax
3-6-12
Attachment # 1