



TESTIMONY OF THE KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
TO THE SENATE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
ON SB 285

January 24, 2018

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of SB 285. We believe SB 285 outlines the first step in analyzing the transportation needs of the state and local governments. The task force and its study requirements will create an informed decision based on past programs, current trends, funding needs, and all the items outlined in the task force study.

Counties play a significant role in transportation. We are responsible for over 100,000 miles of road in this state, which is 80% of roads in Kansas. We are also responsible for over 19,000 bridges, which roughly equates to three-quarters of the bridges in Kansas. While the state highway system represents the major routes within the state, almost all trips begin and end on a local street or road. The feeder routes of county roads and city streets are an essential element of the transportation system of the state and need to be considered in any analysis of our transportation system. For this reason, we believe the study and report discussed in SB 285 should also include a review of local roads.

Kansas counties have had a long and positive relationship with KDOT, and we want ensure that partnership into the future. A good example of the partnership between the state and locals is the Federal Funds Exchange Program, which was started in FY 2011 and allows local government to receive federal funds through KDOT with a state match.

Although not mentioned in the bill, we hope that public safety will be considered in the study. There have been reports that traffic accident fatalities are increasing in Kansas. At the local level, we see outdated roads, many of which do not have shoulders and other modern safety details. Without modernization of these roads they are hazardous to drive. It is our belief that the citizens of Kansas want our road system to become safer every year, and priority should be given to improvement of roads with safety issues in mind.

We support the bill, and ask the committee to recommend it favorably. Thank you for your time.

Melissa Wangemann
General Counsel/Director of Legislative Services
Wangemann@kansascounties.org
785-272-2585, Ext 307