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House and Senate Joint Committee on Commerce
Written only Testimony in Favor of HB 2793
by Tim McKee, CEO
March 10, 2026

Chairman Tarwater, Chairman Alley and honorable committee members of the Senate and House Committees,

My name is Tim McKee, CEO of the Olathe Chamber of Commerce, the largest chamber in Johnson County. Our mission is to be the voice of business and advance the economic well-being and quality of life in Olathe. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these written comments in support of HB 2793, which proposes to establish the Kansas Sports Facilities Authority.

The Olathe Chamber of Commerce supports this legislation because it creates a responsible and structured framework for Kansas to pursue a major economic development opportunity while protecting taxpayers and ensuring long-term accountability.

Professional sports facilities are widely recognized as major economic drivers and catalysts for regional investment. Across the country, public ownership of NFL stadiums is the standard model—26 of the 30 NFL stadiums currently operating in the United States are publicly owned. This legislation reflects that reality while establishing a governance structure that fits Kansas law and aligns with the State's STAR Bond framework.

Importantly, this proposal is not simply about building a stadium. It is about positioning Kansas for long-term economic growth and regional competitiveness. A project of this magnitude would generate significant benefits for local businesses, including hospitality, retail, construction, and service industries. It would attract visitors from across the region and nation, supporting hotels, restaurants, transportation services, and small businesses throughout Johnson County and the Kansas City metropolitan area.

For communities like Olathe, the regional economic impact of large-scale sports and entertainment facilities extends well beyond the immediate stadium footprint. Major events and year-round programming create additional demand for lodging, dining, shopping, and tourism experiences across the entire region. These activities support local jobs, increase economic activity, and strengthen Kansas's ability to compete for national events.

The legislation before you also takes an important step by establishing a clear governance and accountability structure through the Kansas Sports Facilities Authority. The proposed authority provides:

- A dedicated entity responsible for ownership and oversight of the facility
- A balanced governing board representing state leadership and participating communities
- Clear limits ensuring the project does not create general obligation debt for the State
- Strong provisions requiring the team to manage operations, carry insurance, and maintain the facility in a first-class manner
- Annual reporting requirements to ensure transparency and legislative oversight

From the perspective of the business community, these elements are critical. They provide a long-term framework that protects the State while allowing Kansas to pursue an opportunity that could deliver significant economic and civic benefits.

The inclusion of provisions ensuring public access for community events is also noteworthy. Facilities like this can host high school championships, graduations, and other community gatherings, providing opportunities for Kansans across the state to benefit from the investment.

Kansas is competing with other states for investment, talent, and major events. Establishing the Kansas Sports Facilities Authority gives our state the tools needed to participate in that competition in a thoughtful and structured way.

For these reasons, the Olathe Chamber of Commerce respectfully encourages the committee to support this legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of HB 2793. If you have any questions, please reach out to our lobbyist, Natalie Bright or myself at tmckee@olathe.org.