SEDGWICK COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
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Dear Chair Bowers, Vice Chair Ryckman, and Committee members:

Sedgwick County Board of County Commissioners are in support of SB 436. This bill modifies K.S.A. 19-214 and increases the cost threshold for when counties are required to use a public bidding process for construction contracts. This cost threshold is being raised from $25,000.00 to $100,000.00.

At the forefront, we would point out that such a modification would mimic the discretion allowed for state construction projects. For reference, the building construction statute for state agencies is K.S.A. 75-3741, and such provisions are specifically subject to K.S.A. 75-3739 In applying K.S.A. 75-3739(a)(7) and (a)(8), if (1) in the judgment of the director of purchases and the head of the acquiring state agency, not seeking competitive bids is in the best interest of the state, and (2) the amount is not in excess of $100,000.00, then the contracts may be awarded without competitive bidding and without additional public notice requirements.

Sedgwick County certainly appreciates the benefit that public bidding has in ensuring government transparency and appropriate procurement practices. However, given the standard increase in costs and inflation, the present threshold of $25,000.00 limits the amounts and types of projects counties can perform without public letting. We believe the recommended increase will allow counties to act with more speed and efficiency in addressing smaller construction projects. The $100,000.00 threshold is a reasonable and appropriate measure in requiring moderate and larger constructions projects to go through the competitive bidding process.

Last, we would point out that the requested modification has legislative precedent. In 1980, the legislature raised the cap in K.S.A. 19-214 from $2,000.00 to $10,000.00. The cap was further raised in 2008 from $10,000.00 to $25,000.00.

Sedgwick County believes SB 436 is a reasonable update to the county construction procedures. We would ask that you support SB 436.

Thank you for considering our testimony in this matter.

Sincerely,

Jeff Blubaugh, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners of Sedgwick County