

House Committee on Commerce, Labor & Economic Development
Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 2471
February 29, 2024

Chairman Tarwater and Committee members, the Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce represents the voice of over 750 business members and serves as the economic development partner within Reno County. We write today in support of House Bill 2471, Powering the EV & Hydrogen Sectors, which will provide a mechanism for Kansas to compete now within these growing and emerging sectors of the economy.

The type of economic development opportunities for which we are trying to compete are squarely in these emerging sectors, but other states and communities are gaining on us. This affects us directly in Reno County, and communities across our state who are developing sites to bring new manufacturing jobs to Kansas.

The focus of this bill is targeted at high quality, high wage jobs that would have a positive effect on the overall Kansas economy, and also differentiates us with a focus on training workers in high wage careers of the future. In Hutchinson, we are positioned to be ready for these type of projects in the future with our training programs at Hutchinson Community College.

The size and scope of the site searches recently has necessitated our efforts to develop capacity for larger industrial sites and we are doing exactly that, developing a new industrial site that will be a game changer for central Kansas, partnering with Reno County and our cities to develop a new 500-acre industrial site. This emerging site on K96 has proximity to a 4-lane highway, rail access, a plan for infrastructure, and was recently rezoned for heavy industrial purposes. It has the potential to bring hundreds of jobs to the region to grow our economy for the next generation. The key elements to aid in our competitiveness are twofold - having the right tools that HB 2471 would provide, and the ability to deliver robust infrastructure on a timeline that meets the needs of industry.

Kansans need every advantage to compete with other states who also want to capture this next wave of capital investment and job creation in the EV and Hydrogen sectors. As economic developers we must compete with every state, and we see daily why Kansas needs these additional tools. For this reason, I request your support of HB2471 to attract new investment into Kansas. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Respectfully,
Debra Teufel, President/CEO
Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce