



March 10, 2025

House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee

Oral (or written) Proponent Testimony for HB 2346

Presented by: Beth Ansell, Executive Director Visit Shawnee

3/11/2025

Chairman Tarwater and House Commerce committee members,

On behalf of Visit Shawnee, a division of the Shawnee Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express our support for HB 2346, which would establish a dedicated sports tourism incentive fund in Kansas. Our organization is responsible for promoting Shawnee as a vibrant and inviting destination for visitors, as well as a dynamic place to live and work. Like many communities across the state, Shawnee has experienced significant growth in sports tourism and is continuously working to expand opportunities to host regional and national sporting events.

Currently, Kansas communities face a competitive disadvantage due to the lack of a dedicated incentive fund. The funding outlined in HB 2346 would be a key driver in attracting major tournaments that stimulate both local and state economies by filling hotel rooms, increasing patronage at local restaurants, and generating greater visits to tourism sites. By passing this legislation, Kansas communities—large and small—will gain the ability to compete more effectively for these economically impactful sporting events and drive out-of-state visitation.

While we strongly support HB 2346, we respectfully request the following adjustments to the proposed legislation:

1. **Clear Determination of Return on Investment Metrics** – Establishing a transparent methodology for assessing the economic impact of funded events will ensure accountability and demonstrate the program’s effectiveness.
2. **Priority for Host Community Hotel Nights** – Ensuring that the host city (where the facility resides) receives priority for hotel stays will maximize local economic benefits and provide direct support to the community facilitating the event.
3. **Inclusion of Existing Tournaments for Grant Eligibility** – Allowing established tournaments to qualify for funding if they can demonstrate year-over-year growth will help sustain and expand successful events already contributing to Kansas’ sports tourism industry.

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Kansas is losing out on sports tourism dollars to neighboring states that have similar incentive programs in place. A dedicated Kansas sports tourism grant program means more major sporting events, more out-of-state visitors, and more tourism-generated revenue within our communities. It will also enhance Kansas' reputation as a premier destination for high-quality sporting competitions, national tournaments, and championship events.

For these reasons, Visit Shawnee submits this testimony in support of House Bill 2346, along with our recommended adjustments, and respectfully requests that the bill be passed out of committee and submitted for full approval by the House of Representatives.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Beth Ansell

Beth Ansell
Executive Director
Visit Shawnee

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