



Senate Committee on Commerce
Written Only Testimony
in Favor of SB 197
Tim McKee, President & CEO
Olathe Chamber of Commerce

February 10, 2025

On behalf of the Olathe Chamber of Commerce I respectfully request the Senate Commerce Committee support renewing the STAR Bonds program for 5 years and pass SB 197.

The success of STAR Bonds in Kansas has been an impactful economic development tool for communities of all sizes throughout Kansas. Olathe is currently working on a STAR Bonds district to build an adaptive recreational park to Kansas. Only the 2nd park of its kind, without this economic development tool, this project would not be happening. The STAR Bond program continues to give Kansas a significant advantage in attracting development and creating destination tourism sites that in turn bring visitors to our state and create entertainment opportunities that help retain our workforce talent in Kansas.

Throughout the years, the legislature has added guardrail provisions that help ensure the program is being used for its intended purpose. These include having the Secretary selecting and overseeing the feasibility study consultants, addition of the “visitor expectation” element of the proposal, impact study focus on state and local economies and the net return analysis. The Olathe Chambers believes these provisions provide assurance of the integrity of the proposed projects.

In fact, our members would support making STAR Bonds a permanent incentive tool and avoid the need to renew it every 5 years. By doing so, Kansas will assure the planned projects the stability and consistency they need to thrive in our state and ultimately ensuring more projects and investment to Kansas.

The State of Kansas and its communities have profited from the STAR Bonds program that generates new jobs and new revenue. Communities, large and small, throughout Kansas have benefited from the STAR Bonds program by developing new attractions that draw tourists to their communities. We ask that you vote to preserve STAR Bonds by supporting SB 197 and enhancing and retaining a valuable economic development tool for the State of Kansas.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Tim McKee, CEO, Olathe Chamber of Commerce