

To: Senate Ways & Means Committee

From: Wendi Stark, Legislative Liaison

Date: February 6, 2025

RE: Proponent Testimony to SB 86 (Written)

Thank you to Chairman Billinger and Committee members for allowing the League of Kansas Municipalities the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for SB 86.

Cities share the need for a consistent and dependable transportation plan at the state level. Just as the League in past sessions has supported enacting the transportation program which became the Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program, we now support the establishment of the intercity passenger rail service program that is proposed in SB 86.

We support expanding rail service throughout the state and with other midwestern states in the region, as well as providing annual funding for the rail service program. This bill would help to connect our cities through our rail transportation system and connect Kansas to other states, which we think is essential in bringing people to and through Kansas.

This legislation is critical for the successful development of the Heartland Flyer Extension to Newton, Kansas. We believe it holds significant benefits to cities in Kansas, such as Arkansas City, Dodge City, Garden City, McPherson, Shawnee, Topeka, and Wichita as well as the Southwest Coalition which have supported expansion of the rail program in the past.

In addition, SB 86 creates the passenger rail service revolving fund and dedicates \$5,000,000 annually to this fund to support the program. In addition, establishing the intercity rail service program enhances our state's ability to obtain additional funding through grants and other revenue streams.

The League of Kansas Municipalities is supportive of SB 86 and respectfully asks the Committee to recommend the bill favorably to the full Senate for its consideration.