

Honorable Rick Billinger, Chair
Senate Ways and Means Committee
Kansas State Capitol
300 Southwest 10th Street
Topeka, KS 66612

Senator Billinger and Members of the Committee,

First, I would like to express my thanks for taking up this bill. As a proponent of passenger rail service, the support of the Kansas Legislature is foundational to its future.

As a citizen from Overland Park, Kansas, I think it important to have transportation options. We travel by car, plane, train, and bus, but out of these, rail is the most efficient and most comfortable. Via Amtrak, we can travel to Chicago, St. Louis, points out west, but we cannot travel to the south using a direct route. This is where the Heartland Flyer Extension plays a key role. It fills a void in the passenger rail network that provides people from Kansas City with a valuable option for points to the south.

Passenger rail takes time to develop, thus this current effort is an important next step.

One conversation I've had of late on the subject of passenger rail, is that it does not pay for itself. To this, I point out, that neither do most highways. Transportation is almost always a cost-center, but it enables growth to all points along the way. Providing access to multiple distant points from Kansas City via the most efficient means of transport ever developed (steel wheels on steel track). It will benefit both urban centers, but also rural communities. It's a win-win.

I'm asking the committee to move forward on this bill.

Regards,



Dan Wancura
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