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Laura Kelly, Governor

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Senator Rick Billinger, Chairman
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Kansas Statehouse, Topeka, Kansas 66612

Dear Chairman Billinger:

The Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP) respectfully submits this testimony regarding the agency's budget. To begin, the agency appreciates the salary adjustments approved by the 2024 Legislature concerning sworn officers and dispatchers. After nearly six months of implementation, the adjustments show positive signs in addressing staffing concerns in these areas.

The KHP was created in 1937 with the principal function of enforcing traffic and other laws of the state relating to highways, vehicles, and drivers, pursuant to KSA 74-2105. Sworn officers of the KHP, which includes State Troopers and Capitol Police, are vested with statewide law enforcement authority. Other statutory and directed duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Enforce state laws relating to commercial motor carriers to reduce the usage of oversized, overweight, or unsafe vehicles on Kansas highways (KSA 74-2108);
- Provide policing of the Kansas Turnpike (KSA 68-2025);
- Operate the Motorist Assistance Program, which involves aid to motorists traveling on highways (Interagency Agreement);
- Inspect the vehicle identification number (VIN) on all vehicles titled for the first time in Kansas to reduce auto theft and recover stolen vehicles (KSA 8-116a);
- Provide law enforcement and security for the Capitol Complex (KSA 74-2105);
- Provide security for the Governor and other officials, as directed (KSA 74-2105); and
- Administer federal Homeland Security grants to state and local entities for the prevention of and recovery from acts of terrorism (federal law).

Budget Requests

The KHP supports the recommendation contained in the Governor's Budget Report. As the primary law enforcement entity for the state highway system, the agency is supported with transfers from the State Highway Fund (SHF). Funding sources for the budget requests include moneys from the SHF and the State General Fund (SGF).

Body-Worn Cameras (\$1.5 million SHF)

The Governor recommends \$1.5 million SHF to further support implementation of body-worn cameras among State Troopers and Motor Carrier Inspectors in FY 2025. The expenditure includes the purchase of 500 cradle point routers that allow for the rapid upload of recorded data from a patrol vehicle, rather than traveling to the nearest Troop headquarters for upload.

The House concurs with the Governor's recommendation.

Urgent Repairs on the KHP Training Academy Campus, Salina (\$1.1 million SGF)

The Governor recommends \$1.1 million SGF for urgent repairs on the KHP Training Academy campus in Salina in FY 2025. Due to the age of the campus, components are beginning to fail, causing concern for the safety of personnel on-site. The repairs involve replacing deteriorating concrete caps covering utility tunnels and multiple collapsed exterior stairs.

The House recommends \$1.0 million, all from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fund.

IT Infrastructure Upgrades (\$800,000 SHF)

The Governor recommends \$800,000 SHF to begin migrating from agency-owned servers to services provided through the Office of Information Technology Services for FY 2026. This migration would address server consolidation, legacy technology upgrades, and backup solutions to cybersecurity concerns.

The House concurs with the Governor's recommendation.

Budget Request Withdrawn**New KHP General Headquarters (\$48.3 million SHF)**

In September 2024, the agency submitted a budget request of \$48.3 million SHF to construct a new General Headquarters (GHQ) facility. The agency currently leases space divided between two buildings at 7th and SW Jackson in Topeka, which expires in 2028.

In November 2024, the agency withdrew the request due to the availability of space at the Curtis State Office Building (COSB) in Topeka. This relocation consolidates all GHQ operations on the first level of the CSOB and provides access to an adjacent parking facility capable of securing law enforcement vehicles. The agency continues to work with the Department of Administration to determine transitional costs, which will likely be submitted to the 2026 Legislature as a budget request for FY 2027.

Items for Consideration**Wichita Aircraft Hangar (\$7.3 million SGF)**

The agency requests \$7.3 million SGF to construct an aircraft hangar at the Jabara Airport in Wichita for FY 2026. The KHP's Central Region Base has been located at a leased hangar on Cook Airfield in rural Sedgwick County since 2023. Cook Airfield, a private airport currently listed for sale, lacks the following capabilities:

- Suitable runway length for all KHP aircraft;
- Fuel for KHP's law enforcement helicopters, Caravan airplane, and the Executive aircraft;
- Instrumentation allowing for aircraft approaches during inclement weather; and
- Perimeter security and controlled access.

In addition to providing all the capabilities listed above, the Jabara Airport location affords immediate access to highways and proximity to other public safety agencies. The project would construct a 27,000 SF facility with hangar and office space on 150,000 SF of leased land at the Jabara Airport. Land includes the building site, parking, and taxiway. KHP would own the building and lease the land from the Wichita Airport Authority.

Other airports in South Central Kansas, including the Augusta City Airport, Eisenhower National Airport, and McConnell Air Force Base, were assessed as potential locations for KHP's Central Region Base. These sites were either cost-prohibitive or presented other barriers.

Financing Options for the Wichita Hangar

The agency proposes the following financing options:

- One-time appropriation of \$7.3 million; or
- \$880,000 for an initial payment on 10-year bonds totaling \$8.8 million.

The House recommends \$7.0 million, all from the federal ARPA Fund.

Aircraft Replacement (\$4.0 million SHF)

The agency requests \$4.0 million SHF to purchase a new Cessna 206 Stationair law enforcement airplane for FY 2026 to replace a 1998 Cessna 206 airplane. The amount includes \$1.5 million for the aircraft and \$2.5 million for outfitting with law enforcement equipment, such as a Forward-Looking Infrared (FLIR) camera, video recorder, and radios. The KHP is the only law enforcement agency in Kansas with aviation assets, and reliable aircraft are essential to support local law enforcement with missing person searches, vehicle pursuits, and manhunts. With over 7,300 flight hours, the 1998 aircraft runs the risk of needing significant component replacement to remain airworthy and lacks the FLIR camera necessary for law enforcement missions.

The House did not add funding for this item.

Salina Campus Reconfiguration (\$51.7 million SGF)

Over the years, KHP's presence in Salina evolved to include multiple locations. An assessment of agency assets in Salina was recently completed pursuant to HB 2551 (2024), with consideration toward reconfiguration on a single site. Currently, the Training Academy, Dispatch Center, Central Supply, and Troop C Headquarters¹ are located on the former Marymount College campus in East Salina, which was constructed from 1922 to 1972 and occupied by KHP in 1994. Other KHP assets in Salina include a 1-mile Driving Course and Central Evidence facility on Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) property in South Salina, Troop S facilities² on the Salina Airport, and a Firearms Range in West Saline County.

Assessment Findings

The assessment identifies the following challenges with existing KHP facilities in Salina:

- Most structures require replacement and lack severe weather hardening and redundant systems to maintain operations in the event of a disaster;
- Some buildings on the Marymount College campus are over 100 years old, and future use would require renovation to extend their useful life. A renovation would be extensive and disruptive to current operations;
- Security and safety challenges that are concerning for a law enforcement agency;
- Assets are spread across Salina, creating operational inefficiency; and
- Current facilities are insufficiently sized to meet KHP's long-term needs.

¹ Troop C provides law enforcement services within an 18-county region in North Central Kansas.

² Troop S includes the Special Response Team (SRT), the Hazardous Devices Unit (HDU), and the Police Service Dog Unit (PSDU) that support local law enforcement in high-risk situations such as barricaded subjects and hostage rescue.

Assessment Recommendation

The assessment recommends partial reconfiguration of KHP assets on a new campus, estimated to cost a total of \$416.6 million and require 182 acres. All assets, except the Central Evidence facility and Firearms Range, would be constructed on a new site. The cost does not account for the sale of the Marymount College campus. The following sites in Salina were recommended:

- **Kansas State University-Salina (KSU-Salina):** 27 acres of state property, with potential to acquire adjacent private property for a new 3-mile Driving Course
- **Kansas National Guard (KSNG):** 16 acres of state property
- **Water Well Road:** 211 acres of private property

Use of state property, such as KSU-Salina or KSNG, could potentially reduce land acquisition costs by \$600,000.

Agency Request for the Salina Campus

The agency concurs with the assessment's recommendation and requests up to \$51.7 million SGF in FY 2026 for the initial steps in reconfiguration. The funding supports relocating the following law enforcement assets, which are a priority for the agency:

- Dispatch Center (\$24.9 million); and
- Troop C Headquarters and Troop S facilities (\$26.8 million).

Funding for the remaining assets, including the Training Academy, Central Supply, and 3-mile Driving Course, would be pursued in subsequent years.

Moving Forward

Should this request be approved, the agency proposes the following:

- Conduct a formal discussion with KSU-Salina, KSNG, or KDOT concerning land use and shared resources, such as utilities, maintenance, and parking, to reduce project costs;
- Gather appraisals for the sale of the Marymount College campus, which stands to offset some costs; and
- Examine non-construction costs to determine aspects suitable for grant funding.

The agency recently engaged Salina area stakeholders, who expressed support for the project and indicated that the former Marymount Campus may be better suited for other purposes.

The House Committee on Appropriations and the Joint Committee on State Building Construction (Joint Committee) recommend that the agency continue to work with the Legislature to satisfy the Salina Campus needs. Further, the House Budget Committee and Joint Committee requested a presentation on the Salina Campus Needs Assessment.

In closing, we thank the Committee for this opportunity to describe the agency's future plans, and we look forward to your thoughtful consideration.

Please contact me at murl.riedel@ks.gov, or 785-296-8082, should there be any questions.

Sincerely,

Murl Riedel, Executive Officer
Kansas Highway Patrol