



1403 Southwest Blvd, Suite B  
Kansas City, Kansas 66103  
[www.kanbikewalk.com](http://www.kanbikewalk.com)

---

## Testimony in Opposition to HB 2735

House Transportation Committee March 5, 2012

KanBikeWalk, Inc.

Honorable members of the Transportation Committee:

I am Dale Crawford, President of KanBikeWalk, a volunteer statewide bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organization. I am a proud Kansas native from Pratt, KS, living in Olathe for the last 25 years. I come before your Committee to testify in opposition to HB 2735, as submitted. HB 2725 would erroneously place property taxes on rail-banked trails within Kansas that are being developed by not-for-profit organizations. Kansas ranks as one of the lowest states in the country in publicly accessible lands and in tourism. There is a direct relationship between these two facts. Kansas ranks so low, that thousands of Kansans leave the state every year to pursue recreation and nature based activities, such as bicycling, hiking, and horse riding that could be pursued in Kansas, if the opportunity readily existed. Rural states, such as Wisconsin, Iowa and Missouri, generate millions of tourism dollars annual just in bicycle-related tourism. Nebraska is beginning to see the tourism benefits, as well. Rail trails are an opportunity to keep Kansans money in Kansas and draw out-of-state tourism revenue to Kansas.

However, this bill is yet another attempt to place a significant financial burden on the non-profits organizations who are trying to provide the recreation, travel and tourism resources Kansans want. We often hear how Kansas is a place where businesses are welcome and entrepreneurship is rewarded. Placing a manufactured and questionable tax burden on these enterprising, hardworking Kansas-based non-profits is completely counter-productive to this business oriented vision of Kansas.

These organizations are not developing rail trails to make money themselves. They are developing these trails to:

1. Celebrate the beauty of Kansas by creating opportunities for people to enjoy its varied lands and communities;
2. Provide a safe, accessible facility for bicyclers, hikers, walkers, equestrians, wagoners, bird watchers and many others to experience the Kansas landscape;
3. Create an opportunity for local travel-based businesses, such as restaurants, motels, bed and breakfasts, gas stations, convenience stores, campgrounds, gift shops, etc., to capitalize on the monies spent by trails users.

For these organizations to succeed, a resolution of taxation issue must be found. The solution must not be a burden on the trail groups, adjacent land owners or the counties these trails pass through. A proposed amendment submitted by Kanza Rail Trail Conservancy President Doug Walker, achieves that triple win solution by clarifying the appropriate removal of property taxes associated with rail-banked rights-of-way and easements. Trail groups would be allowed to focus their resources on providing a public amenity for all Kansans to use. Adjacent property owners should not and would not be required to incur any taxes on the land not under their control. Counties where rail-banked corridors exist would be able to treat all trails and adjacent landowners in a fair and uniform manner across the state.

KanBikeWalk respectfully ask your opposition to HB 2735, as submitted, and your support of the proposed amendment to HB 2735 submitted by KRTC to remove rail-banked corridors from taxation.

Sincerely,



Dale V Crawford, ASLA, LCI  
President  
KanBikeWalk  
1403 Southwest Blvd  
Kansas City, KS 66103

Home Address: 512 N Curtis St  
Olathe, KS 66061  
Ph (913) 829-6588