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**STAR Bonds  
SB 124**

**March 16, 2021**

House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development

Chair Tarwater, Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of STAR Bond reauthorization, and as a proponent of SB 124. We appreciate the time and effort of the Chair and Committee to seriously study the issue of STAR Bond reform and reauthorization, and to hold hearings on the subject. We believe STAR Bond reauthorization is good public policy that allows for certain reforms to be made, while still allowing the program to continue so we can carry on with our work in creating first class regional and national attractions for the State of Kansas that drive tourism and consumer spending. I would like to take a moment to touch on a few of the meaningful and far-reaching impacts attributable to STAR Bonds and the public-private partnerships behind them.

STAR Bonds are one of the most powerful tools, if not *the* most powerful tool, for economic development in Kansas, and played a huge role in the about-face of Wyandotte County. It began more than twenty years ago with the Kansas Speedway, and STAR Bonds have continued to spur and stimulate other surrounding and supportive development, including the Village West STAR Bond project that, as of early 2020, had created 11,000 new jobs and, in turn, \$7 million of new State income taxes, as well as \$42 million in annual sales tax revenue for the State. Projects made possible because of STAR Bonds include everything from Nebraska Furniture Mart, the

Legends and Cabela's, to Sporting Kansas City, Children's Mercy Park and the U.S. National Training Center.

The impact of STAR Bonds isn't just limited to Wyandotte County, however; this tool has also produced substantial and positive results elsewhere in the State, including Garden City, Dodge City, Salina, Hutchinson, Wichita, Derby, and Goddard, to name a few. All of these projects have driven additional economic development in Kansas, and helped to provide new opportunities for many of our communities. My firm is very proud to have worked closely with this Committee, the legislature, the Governor, local government, and many other interested stakeholders in seeing these projects through fruition.

Above all else, STAR Bonds provide an important competitive advantage. The physical tourism and major business attractants of Kansas are few and far between. We do have a great business climate, however, and some of the strongest public-private partnerships like STAR Bonds that are the envy of other states. I have been involved with numerous projects and spoken about Kansas development incentives in a number of other jurisdictions around the country. Many are envious of STAR Bonds. They realize that this tool is about investing in our future now in order to realize tangible and substantial benefits down the road.

We applaud the Committee for seriously studying the issue of STAR Bond reform, and rise today as proponents of STAR Bond reauthorization and SB 124.

Respectfully submitted,



Korb W. Maxwell