



**Statement of the National Elevator Industry, Inc.
in SUPPORT of SB 181,
an Act related to Elevators, Escalators, and other
Building Transportation Equipment Standards**

January 19, 2022

The National Elevator Industry, Inc. (NEII) is the leading trade association for companies that manufacture, install, and maintain elevators, escalators, moving walks, and other building transportation products. NEII members collectively represent over eighty-five percent of the work hours in the building transportation industry.

The elevator industry is concerned with safety first and foremost. We fully support the efforts of the Kansas Legislature to pass SB 181, which is based on the industry's Model Elevator Legislation developed to create balanced state programs and promote the utmost in elevator safety. When enacted, this bill will ensure that building transportation in the state meets all safety requirements.

In Kansas, the responsibility for the regulation of building transportation equipment lies with local jurisdictions, unless it is a state building. This approach has resulted in a hodge-podge of codes and standards across the state, inconsistent licensing requirements, and a mixture of inspection protocols. At present, Kansas is one of only two states that has not adopted a statewide safety code for elevators and escalators. More importantly, there is no single minimally accepted safety standard across the state for commercial building transportation.

ENSURING SAFETY FOR ALL KANSAS COMMUNITIES

Numerous cities and counties have not adopted building codes, with others operating under codes that are over a decade old. Over twenty different building codes are in effect throughout the state. With jurisdictions operating under various codes or none at all, the inconsistency creates safety risks, challenges, and uncertainty for both the industry and riders.

SB 181 would address the current deficiency in Kansas by 1) establishing an Elevator Safety Advisory Board, and 2) requiring the state fire marshal to adopt the current model codes known as the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) A17.1 Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators (which was merged with the Canadian Standards Association's (CSA) comparable safety code) and is now commonly referred to as ASME A17.1/CSA B44.

MINIMUM PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS PROVIDE INCREASED SAFETY

Licensing requirements for elevator mechanics establish minimum standards for qualifications, education, and training that can be relied on by both the public and the industry. The installation, maintenance and repair of elevators, escalators, moving sidewalks, etc. are very complex and technical undertakings. Like all professions, the building transportation industry has specific protocols to ensure that individuals working on this equipment are properly trained.

NEII's member companies support licensing requirements because they already undertake steps to ensure their workers are adequately prepared. A safety risk exists for both workers and the public, however, when other companies do not invest in comparable training and there is no enforcement mechanism to check credentials and whether the work has been completed correctly.

SB 181 would require industry licensing so that elevator mechanics would need to demonstrate core competencies in order to work on this complicated equipment with Kansas. In addition, the bill would require minimum qualifications for the licensure of contractors and inspectors be created as well.

EXEMPTIONS FOR JURISDICTIONS WITH PROGRAMS

As discussed, SB 181 would establish a critical state safety program to oversee the elevator industry operating within the state of Kansas. At the same time, SB 181 recognizes that many communities already have robust programs and, therefore, would not apply to those localities with requirements that meet or exceed the standards outlined in this bill.

ELEVATOR BOARDS IS A TOOL TO ASSIST IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACT

Elevator boards are used throughout the U.S. and Canada to assist jurisdictions in the oversight, regulation, and enforcement of this very specialized industry. Currently, thirty-nine states have an elevator board or advisory committee. All of them operate under the jurisdiction of a state or local agency and provide invaluable technical support. For Kansas, the advisory board of industry stakeholders outlined under SB 181 will help the state fire marshal create this new program, drawing from expertise and experience gained through industry involvement in elevator programs for other jurisdictions.

REVENUE NEUTRAL PROGRAM

The new elevator program should be revenue-neutral for the state of Kansas. SB 181 includes specific language that requires the elevator board to set fees for licenses, permits, and inspections in amounts sufficient to cover the costs of the program. The industry supports these cost-based fees and considers them to be an appropriate investment to develop a program that, ultimately, increases elevator safety for the riding public and industry personnel.

CONCLUSION

NEII appreciates passage of this bill by the Kansas Senate last year and is committed to working with this committee and the Kansas House to secure final passage in 2022. SB 181 is an important bill to create minimum safety standards that are logical and necessary to protect both the riding public and elevator industry workers in the state of Kansas.

Members of the NEII staff as well as representatives from our member companies, to are available to meet with you or other members of the legislature to address any questions. Thank you for your time and attention to this important public safety issue.