

SOUTHWEST KANSAS COALITION

**Proponent Testimony [Written only]
Before the Senate Committee on Transportation
In Support of Senate Bill No. 349
February 7, 2024**

Senator Peterson and Members of the Committee:

The Southwest Kansas Coalition collectively represents the cities of Dodge City, Garden City and Liberal and is commonly known as SKC. We are a group of communities united in our desire to secure a strong future for the southwest region of Kansas. We appreciate the opportunity to submit remarks in support of Senate Bill No. 349.

Senate Bill No. 349 requires the Kansas Department of Transportation to create an intercity passenger rail service program to assist in the establishment and financial support for the Heartland Flyer extension by setting aside specific project funding to the passenger rail service revolving fund.

SKC strongly advocates for improved passenger rail service in Kansas, as well as the essential transportation connections that passenger rail can offer. We believe it is crucial to have convenient passenger rail access, especially for the southwestern region of the state.

SKC is encouraged by the State's active involvement in the extension project and the benefits of long-distance passenger rail service to new destinations, without imposing detrimental impacts to existing Kansas rail service ridership and operations.

The funding provided for in Senate Bill No. 349 is a great start to connect Kansas with other passenger rail service operations servicing the State.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to present this written testimony to the Committee. We encourage you to consider Senate Bill No. 349 favorably.

Nick Hernandez
City Manager
City of Dodge City

Matt Allen
City Manager
City of Garden City

Rusty Varnado,
City Manager
City of Liberal