

## TESTIMONY

Senate Transportation Committee

January 25, 2012

First, I want to congratulate KDOT on their TIMELY processing of the PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN. Texas and Oklahoma have already restored Passenger Rail Service, and it will take Kansas another 7 years?

Since forming Economic Lifelines in 1987 and passage of the landmark \$3.3 billion comprehensive highway program in 1989, I have been testifying as a proponent of Passenger Rail Service since October 26, 2008.

Public support for new, far-reaching passenger rail service in Kansas is strong and growing. This support is genuine, grass-roots in its origin, with – I believe – the staying power necessary for the long legislative and bureaucratic slog that will reunite Kansas with its glorious railroad past. If I may here's a recap of the process as it now stands.

- Over 80 resolutions have been passed by city and county governments and various business groups calling for enhanced passenger rail service in the state.
- Of the four options presented in the Amtrak Feasibility Study, the third option has won near-universal support -- two daily daytime stops in Arkansas City, Wichita, Newton, Emporia, Topeka, Lawrence, and Kansas City with anticipated annual ridership of 200,500 passengers at a cost of \$436.2 million requiring a 20% state start-up match of \$87.2 million. The annual state-operating subsidy is only \$8 million.
- A study of financial impact (conducted by the University of Kansas) shows a projected economic impact of \$3.20 for every \$1.00 invested.
- Oklahoma's experience is reassuring. Towns along the route averaged \$4 million in increased economy activity the first year after the trains' arrival.
- Bottom line: a three-to-one return on investment. A reason to celebrate.

A Service Development Plan is required for any state applying for federal assistance for passenger-rail capital projects. The projected seven-year timeframe for implementation needs to be challenged. LOUDLY! Since all new train service will be located on existing railroad right-of-way, an Environmental Assessment, rather than an Environmental Impact Statement, will most surely suffice.

We need in particular to remind Governor Brownback of his all-important role in the process. He simply must engage in the top-level discussions on the Multi-State Compacts with Texas, Oklahoma, and Missouri. It is my understanding that the Tulsa route is mutually beneficial to Wichita.

All aboard!

Shelby Smith