



February 16, 2021

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce and our nearly 1,500 members, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 172; AN ACT concerning crimes, punishment and criminal procedure; creating the crimes of trespassing on a critical infrastructure facility and criminal damage to a critical infrastructure facility; eliminating the crime of tampering with a pipeline; amending K.S.A. 2020 Supp. 21- 5818 and 21-6328 and repealing the existing sections.

This legislation makes clear that knowingly trespassing on a critical infrastructure facility is a crime punishable by law. It also criminalizes the act of damaging critical infrastructure. The Chamber supports this commonsense and necessary public policy.

Our modern-day economy and American citizens' everyday lives, including Kansans, rely upon the uninterrupted delivery of petroleum, natural gas, electricity, water, and other resources that depend upon critical infrastructure facilities and systems. Recent examples from the last few years and even the last few days demonstrate how disruptive failures of these systems and facilities can be.

Airports, hospitals, major manufacturing plants, and typical American households suffer when these systems are disrupted. Lives can be lost when critical care technology cannot be utilized due to power disruptions. Always unfortunate, these disruptions are even more troubling when the intentional acts of vandals cause them. For example, a Native American tribe lost access to clean drinking water for months when vandals damaged the tribe's water system. Various industries have lost millions of dollars due to intentional damage to oil and gas infrastructure such as pipelines. We recently learned that some groups have successfully hacked into the systems that control major American cities' water infrastructure systems.

The government should have every tool at its disposal to protect critical infrastructure. We believe the policy contained in S.B. 172 is one positive step in that direction. With this in mind, we urge the Committee to report S.B. 172 favorable for passage.

Very truly yours,

Jason P. Watkins
Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce