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**Testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee
In Support of SB219
March 18, 2019**

Chairman Wilborn and Committee members:

Our associations support SB219. In 2015, SB11 was passed making statute changes to address the problem of metal theft, including the creation of a statewide database. At the time, Kansas was seeing major losses from metal thefts that were targeting utility companies, irrigation systems, and other farm and ranch related losses. This was a new trend in addition to an existing long-term problem of copper being stripped from vacant buildings, air conditioner units being stolen, wiring stripped from highway lighting systems, and even stolen highway guardrails. Many industries were reporting these types of losses as well, including the aircraft industry in Wichita.

During a recent response to an inquiry of our members, most respondents reported these thefts are currently remaining fairly steady, with a few reporting increases and some reporting decreases. Many respondents added they expect the problem to increase again when scrap prices go up.

Part of the plan in 2015 SB11 was a statewide database of persons selling metal to scrap yards for recycling. Unfortunately, that part of the plan never became a reality. This bill creates an alternative approach to creating that database.

We know these criminals often transport these stolen items to other jurisdictions to convert their stolen goods. They know a weak link in our system is the ability to track the stolen items to scrap yards away from the area of the criminal act. The database proposed in this bill will help close that weak link.

These databases are more helpful than just the paper logs used today or systems used to issue alerts for property after it is stolen. Using a database like the one envisioned, we can analyze the data to look for trends allowing us to focus on new patterns of items stolen and persons showing a pattern of suspicious transactions.

We recognize the concerns voiced by the KBI and encourage the committee to entertain solutions to address those concerns so this bill can be moved forward.

Ed Klumpp
Legislative Liaison