



Monday, January 31, 2022

**Testimony in Support of SB 347**

**Before the House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee**

**Ann Smith-Tate, President & CEO, Shawnee Chamber of Commerce**

**Executive Director, Shawnee Economic Development Council**

Chairman Tarwater and Members of the House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee.

Thank you for providing me this opportunity to appear before you in support of SB 347, as the President & CEO of the Shawnee Chamber of Commerce and as the Executive Director of the Shawnee Economic Development Council, I bear witness regularly to economic opportunities that could alter the trajectory of my community, region and even the State. Too many times we lose out on these opportunities and see significant job creation and investment go elsewhere. Each of these losses represent economic opportunities that could provide a better life for our families and help us as we continue to build a state that is a great place to live, a good place to work, and a secure place to raise our children.

The simple fact of economic development is in today's global economy we are competing consistently with regions and states that are continually upping their commitment to attract companies with this type of qualifying investment. If the State of Kansas does not keep pace and keep competitive, we are simply not going to be at the table when the crucial deals are put together and major expansions decided.

In fact, since 2017 the State of Kansas has been in the running for eleven, yes eleven "megaprojects" all of which chose other states to invest and grow. The APEX legislation will not be just a good deal for the company and the community where the business locates but has the power to leverage company suppliers to locate in Kansas as well as bringing an estimated direct and indirect benefit to the state of \$2.5 billion annually.

I have spent nearly 20 years in economic development working to attract investment in both Kansas and Missouri and the reality is that incentives are required. I understand that incentives are often maligned or misunderstood and sometimes in fact, overused. The APEX legislation in front of you has made a good faith effort to provide accountability and transparency both hallmarks of good dealmaking.

The APEX incentive package could be the "game changer" that we desperately need. To land a \$4 billion dollar investment would be transformative for our state and there is little debate about that. I am confident support for this legislation and initiative is broad and deep among ED advocates as well as our state's business community. *I ask for your support in moving this legislation forward with the original refundability provision, so this program has the economic strength to truly be an incentive that differentiates Kansas from other states. In addition, the 1-year sunset provision adopted should be extended for a longer duration, so the pending megaproject is given an opportunity to be fully implemented and afford Kansas an opportunity to take a big step towards building a stronger and sounder economy for us all.*

Again, thank you for your time and consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions you have, Representatives.