



TESTIMONY

to
KANSAS SENATE
COMMERCE COMMITTEE

Mayor Carol Lehman, City of Gardner, Kansas

February 15, 2007
Senate Bill 316

Honorable Chairperson Brownlee and Committee Members:

The City of Gardner is a rapidly growing community in the southwestern Kansas City Metropolitan area. We have been working diligently for the last ten years to prepare for the growth we are experiencing. We have been completing comprehensive development plans for land and utilities, multi-year financial forecasting and budgeting, while carefully managing our overall debt burden. We have been working to control taxes and fees while simultaneously expanding our streets, parks, water, wastewater and electric infrastructure. Today, Gardner has almost doubled in population since 2000 and we have nearly 17,000 citizens. Because of this, our City has many significant capital projects which we have been funding to meet the ever growing demand for services caused by the influx of new residents.

Therefore, Gardner is limited in our capacity to assist with the funding of the KC Logistics Hub. We do not have any sources of funds outside of those that will be generated by the project to use for the project. We also know that there will be further increased demands for services with this development. Our City's funding sources are already committed to providing infrastructure and services to our current planning area. The KC Logistics Hub site was not in that planning area. However, the logistics hub site is adjacent to current City boundaries and, therefore, it makes sense for the City of Gardner to have control over the planning and development of this area.

The City of Gardner did not seek out this project; yet it's on our doorstep and it will affect my community greatly. Given our current growth demands, our City does not have the financial abilities to fund this project, nor should we be required to provide the funds on our own. It is clear this project will be a significant benefit to the State of Kansas and other governmental entities. In fact, we believe it will keep the State of Kansas economically viable for years to come. The project needs expensive public improvements, and in order for the City to be able to participate with any assistance, we need a new mechanism to capture future tax dollars off the site.

The citizens of Gardner have clearly told the governing body they want this development to pay its own way and I am committed to find as many options as possible to carry out the will of our constituents. Therefore, I respectfully request that you consider adding intermodal transportation areas as an additional eligibility within the TIF statutes to provide Gardner an added economic development tool to aid in making this project a success for everyone.

Sincerely,

Carol Lehman, Mayor
City of Gardner