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February 17, 2025

Honorable Larry Alley
Kansas State Senate
300 Southwest 10th Street
Topeka, KS 66612

RE: Letter of Support SB 86

Dear Senator Alley,

The City of Wellington strongly supports bistate efforts to extend Amtrak's Heartland Flyer to Newton, Kansas. On November 18, 2008, Wellington was among the earliest cities supporting this development when it passed Resolution 5267. Investing in new passenger rail infrastructure is an economic development opportunity benefiting South Central Kansas and the greater Wichita region. The proposed railroad will benefit Wellington as our citizens need not travel north to board in Wichita for a train traveling south, and likewise for arrival back from the south. Such opportunities are rare in this part of the state.

Expansion of the Amtrak national system is under study, and one of the three top-tier (future) routes would transit Wellington. The Heartland Flyer can leverage tourist interest in regional attractions, such as the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield and the Etzenoa archeological site and visitors center. Extension of passenger routes could also facilitate student travel to Cowley County Community College campuses across the region. Offering transportation options for residents of South Central Kansas, both north and south, is essential to the region. The success of passenger rail expansion for our constituents is dependent on the commitment of the State of Kansas, the Kansas Department of Transportation, and the state legislature. Your leadership in that regard is critical, as there are multiple benefits to the 32nd district.

We understand that SB 86 is active in the Senate Ways and Means Committee. We know the window for action is brief. The City of Wellington asks that you engage your fellow legislators to ensure that SB 86 passes out of committee to full vote in the Senate.

Sincerely,

Mayor Joe Soria
City of Wellington