

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the 2025 Interim

September 16, 2025

Call to Order and Roll Call

The fourth meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Transportation was held on September 16, 2025, at 1:00 PM in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Representative John Blanton, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative John Blanton, Co-Chair; Senators Karen Berg, Jared Carpenter, Donald Douglas, Greg Elkins, Brandon Smith, Brandon J. Storm, Phillip Wheeler, and Gex Williams; and Representatives Ryan Bivens, Randy Bridges, Anne Gay Donworth, Myron Dossett, David Hale, Samara Heavrin, John Hodgson, Thomas Huff, Mary Beth Imes, Matthew Lehman, Derek Lewis, Amy Neighbors, Rachel Roarx, Tom Smith, Ashley Tackett Laferty, Walker Thomas, and Ken Upchurch.

Guests: Johnathan Dixon, Executive Director, Kentucky Aviation Association (KAA); Tristan Durbin, Manager, Owensboro/Daviess County Regional Airport, Board President, KAA; Dusty McCoy, Legislative Chair, KAA; Representative Richard White; Representative Patrick Flannery; Bubba Johnson, Owner and Operator, Bubba's Towing and Recovery; Barbara McGuire, Owner and Operator, McGuire's Towing and Recovery; Desiree Lykins; Kenneth Jerry Cantrell; Representative Candy Massaroni; John Moore, Executive Director, Office of Project Delivery and Preservation, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC); Brad Spalding, County Road Engineer, Nelson County; Brad Metcalf, Emergency Services Director, Nelson County; Eddie Whitworth, Chief, Bloomfield Police Department; John Hendricks, Nelson County EMS ; Representative Peyton Griffiee; Representative Josh Calloway; Tanya Serna; Wilson Green; and Representative Nancy Tate.

LRC Staff: John Snyder, Dana Fugazzi, Ashley Nash, and Angela Rhodes.

Approval of August 18, 2025 Minutes

Senator Douglas made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 18, 2025, meeting. Representative Heavrin seconded the motion, which passed by voice vote.

Kentucky Aviation Association

Johnathan Dixon, Executive Director; KAA; Tristan Durbin, Manager, Owensboro/Daviess County Regional Airport, Board President, KAA; and Dusty McCoy, Legislative Chair, KAA, briefed the committee. Kentucky has more than 50 public use general aviation airports.

Committee meeting materials may be accessed online at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/CommitteeDocuments/34>

General aviation supports business, tourism, agriculture, medical and emergency services, and also connects rural communities to state, national, and international markets. Each year, aviation contributes over \$1.6 billion to Kentucky's economy, supports more than 9,400 jobs, provides over \$400 million in labor income, and generates vital tax revenue.

Mr. McCoy requested the continuation of funding for the general aviation airports to ensure operational stability for small and rural airports, and promote aviation accessibility, education, and safety statewide. He also requested an adjustment to KRS 65A.020 and 65A.030 for small airports to simplify the audit processes and reduce the administrative burden.

The KAA endorses long-term funding for general aviation, which includes a sustainable funding model for general aviation infrastructure, a plan for maintenance, safety upgrades, and growth, and a plan that ensures the adequate support for all Kentucky airports. A request was also made to fund the AERO Act, an act relating to aerospace infrastructure, which includes securing resources to support aviation and innovation, and enhance Kentucky's competitiveness in aviation.

In response to Senator Wheeler, Mr. McCoy stated there is a jet fuel tax capped at \$1 million per user per year, and the KAA will not be advocating for a change to that amount. He added they just want an appropriations process that meets the capital needs of the airports.

In response to Representative Smith, Mr. McCoy stated there are mechanisms in place to properly communicate the need for pilots and mechanics. Representative Smith also requested the proper channels to go through to request simulators to prepare potential future employees in the aviation field.

Senator Smith advocated for more aviation programs in the rural Eastern Kentucky area.

Lighting Standard for Tow Trucks

Representative White discussed his legislative proposal regarding lighting standards for tow trucks. "Troy's Law" is in honor of Troy Caldwell, a tow truck operator killed at an accident scene in Bath County. The bill would amend KRS 189.920 to allow wreckers to be equipped with a flashing, rotating, or oscillating blue light when the wrecker is stationary and is removing a vehicle or debris from the highway. It would prohibit a wrecker from using a blue light when towing a vehicle. Representative Flannery; Bubba Johnson, Owner and Operator, Bubba's Towing and Recovery; and Barbara McGuire, Owner and Operator, McGuire's Towing and Recovery, appeared with Representative White in favor of the measure. Desiree Lykins, Troy Caldwell's daughter, and his boss, Kenneth Jerry Cantrell, were in attendance to show support for the legislation.

Senator Berg expressed her support for the legislation and expressed condolences for Mr. Caldwell's survivors. In response to Senator Berg, Representative Flannery stated there are certain restrictions for the use of different lights on vehicles. For example, it is currently illegal for people in the towing industry to utilize blue lights.

Representative Hale expressed his support for the legislation and hoped any opposition could be overcome.

Senator Elkins expressed his support for the legislation but voiced his concern of the public being desensitized to blue lighting. In response to Senator Elkins, Chair Blanton confirmed there is a statute that requires vehicles to move over and yield in response to an accident or towing need.

In response to Representative Donworth, Representative White stated the Kentucky State Police were not in favor of a similar bill last year, but he has not discussed it with them this year.

In response to Senator Wheeler, Representative White stated the blue light would only be deployed from a stationary standpoint and not while the tow truck was in motion.

In response to Representative Lehman, Chair Blanton stated there are other statutes that regulate lights and who can use what type and color of light. This is not addressed in this legislation.

In response to Representative Roarx concerning the letter of opposition that was received, Representative Flannery stated he is unaware of how prevalent those issues of concern are.

Road Striping Reflectivity

Representative Massaroni discussed her legislative proposal, 2025 RS HB 431, concerning road striping reflectivity. HB 431 created a new section of KRS Chapter 189 to require KYTC to conduct a quality assurance test six months after each highway pavement marking or other highway paint application. It also required KYTC to repair or reapply the highway pavement markings within 30 days of a failed quality assurance test. Brad Spalding, County Engineer, Nelson County; Brad Metcalf, Emergency Services Director, Nelson County; Eddie Whitworth, Chief, Bloomfield Police Department; and John Hendricks, Nelson County EMS, all appeared with Representative Massaroni to support the measure.

John Moore, Executive Director, Office of Project Delivery and Preservation, KYTC, stated striping costs are approximately \$25 million per year, and re-striping is only done based on need and funding availability. Generally, higher volume roads are striped yearly, and

secondary and minor roads are striped every three years depending on how far funding can be stretched. He added the cabinet has started transitioning to thermoplastic paint on high volume roads, which is a more durable and has better reflective striping material. Striping width also increased from four inches to six inches to improve visibility. He briefly discussed the quality assurance program for striping.

In response to Representative Bivens, Mr. Moore stated state and federal highways are treated the same within KYTC when it comes to funding for striping. The spraying of brine on roads in the fall and winter does cover the paint, which is why KYTC does not test reflectivity in winter.

In response to Senator Douglas, Mr. Moore stated he does not have information concerning collisions on country roads versus highways but can provide it at a later date. County roads are striped depending on the jurisdiction and budget. Often times there are fewer county roads striped than state roads.

Sponsorship Agreements for Transportation Facilities

Representative Griffie discussed his legislative proposal, 2025 RS HB 112, which created a new section of KRS Chapter 177 to allow KYTC to enter into agreements with private entities to sponsor welcome centers and rest areas on the interstate and state highway system. The bill directs all proceeds to be used on maintenance and upkeep of the welcome center or rest area.

Representative Donworth suggested language be added to exclude exclusivity within a given industry.

Representative Bivens raised concern about language that would remove all acknowledgement, signs, messages, and markers after the expiration.

Senator Berg questioned costs associated with the sponsorship agreements and encouraged safeguards to ensure sponsors are paying the true value of prime locations. Representative Griffie stated he requested a fiscal note last year, which showed minimal impact, but he is willing to look into it further.

Control of Vegetation at Rail Crossings

Representative Calloway discussed his legislative proposal, 2025 RS HB 407. HB 407 created a new section of KRS Chapter 277 to require railroad companies to destroy or remove obstructive vegetation at intersections with public roads or highways; to direct KYTC or local governments to remove obstructive vegetation if the railroad company fails to do so; and to establish procedures for reimbursement by the railroad company for the vegetation removal. Tanya Serna, mother of Hunter Serna, who was tragically struck and killed by a

train due to an obstructed view by vegetation; Wilson Green, an attorney from Louisville; and Representative Tate, appeared in support of the measure.

In response to Representative Hodgson, Representative Tate stated Kentucky has jurisdiction and the model language has been endorsed by the Federal Railroad Administration. She added 34 other states have enacted similar legislation, and grants have been allotted, as well as other funds to maintain railroad safety.

In response to Representative Tackett Laferty, Representative Calloway stated discussions have been had and will continue concerning penalties if reimbursement to KYTC for railroad improvements are not timely.

Senator Douglas requested information that clearly defines who owns the right-of-way on a particular crossing. He highlighted that the local government may take appropriate legal action to collect the amount owed and stated "with applicable fees" should be added to that language.

Chair Blanton thanked Ms. Serna for presenting and fighting for Hunter's memory.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the committee, Chair Blanton adjourned the meeting at 2:40 PM.