

February 20, 2015

RE: HB 2296 – Public Building Commission

Dear Local Government Committee:

The Clay County Board of County Commissioners would like to be on record as being in support of HB 2296 which would give residents the privilege of voting on issues utilizing the “Public Building Commission”. More over and over, local governmental entities are using “creative” methods to increase funding for certain projects. While we believe some of these methods are justified, we also believe the voter/taxpayer should have the right to vote on such matters.

A Public Building Commission currently gives a city or county the ability to circumvent the debt restraints and increase the ultimate debt load on the local taxpayer. Kansas Statutes place a limit on the amount of debt a governmental entity can incur. These limits were legislated to provide some protection to the local taxpayer from a governmental body who may have become too aggressive in their need for borrowing capacity. The Public Building Commission has its place, BUT regardless of whether it's a local city council, county commission, or public building commission, it's all a debt load on the local property owners. Therefore, allowing the public to vote on a Public Building Commission issue provides the needed checks and balances for the public. An election forces the issue into the public comment arena and provides a forum for good discussion and examination of the issue.

We would urge you to act favorably upon HB 2296.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,