



To: House Committee on Local Government
From: Trey Cocking, Emporia City Manager
Subject: Testimony Opposing Kansas House Bill 2025 (In-Person)
Date: January 29, 2025

Chairperson Bergquist and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the City of Emporia, I am submitting this testimony in opposition to House Bill 2025, which seeks to eliminate the authority of cities to adopt planning and zoning regulations for land located outside of their city limits. This proposed legislation would have significant negative impacts on local governance and regional planning efforts.

Local Control and Regional Planning

House Bill 2025 undermines the ability of cities like Emporia to engage in thoughtful and coordinated planning that extends beyond their immediate boundaries. Municipalities often work collaboratively with surrounding areas to ensure orderly development, efficient use of infrastructure, and the preservation of community character. The proposed legislation would disrupt these efforts and create unnecessary complications in land use planning.

Impact on Emporia and Lyon County

Currently, Lyon County does not have extraterritorial zoning regulations in place. However, maintaining the authority for cities to implement such measures when necessary is crucial for long-term development strategies. Should future growth pressures arise, the ability to establish zoning regulations outside city limits will ensure responsible and practical development that aligns with the needs of our residents and businesses.

Furthermore, current state laws already empower County Commissioners to handle extraterritorial zoning matters effectively. They have the necessary tools and authority to coordinate with municipalities and address development concerns without the need for additional legislation that limits local autonomy. The ability to enforce three-mile zoning can help eliminate risks for businesses by providing predictability and stability in development, ensuring that growth occurs in an orderly and coordinated manner.

Economic Considerations

Restricting municipal zoning authority could lead to fragmented development, increased infrastructure costs, and logistical challenges. The City of Emporia and Lyon County are best positioned to address local development issues, ensuring growth occurs in a manner that protects public health, safety, and welfare while fostering economic opportunities.

Conclusion

House Bill 2025 represents an unnecessary restriction on local authority and threatens the ability of communities like Emporia to plan for their future effectively. The City of Emporia urges the committee to oppose this bill and support the continued authority of cities to engage in comprehensive and strategic planning efforts that benefit both urban and rural areas.

Thank you for your consideration.