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January 29, 2025

Chairman Bergquist and Members of the Committee, on behalf of the City of Liberal, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to HB 2025. Maintaining the 3-mile zone is essential for ensuring that utility extensions, roadway infrastructure, flood mitigation systems, and desirable community spaces are developed cohesively and strategically. Without the safeguards provided by current law, the potential for uncoordinated developments under county zoning regulations could lead to significant challenges for cities and their residents.

First and foremost, the absence of the 3-mile extraterritorial planning and zoning authority could result in county zoning regulations permitting developments that hinder future city expansion. Such developments may complicate or increase the costs of extending essential infrastructure and services, making it more difficult for cities to accommodate growth effectively. By maintaining the 3-mile zone, cities can ensure that development occurs in a manner that supports long-term planning and minimizes costly obstacles.

Furthermore, allowing county zoning to dictate development on the outskirts of a city poses a risk to economic development. Certain industries or projects reliant on nearby city infrastructure could be "boxed out," delaying progress and placing significant limitations on economic growth opportunities. Cities must retain the ability to plan and implement infrastructure extensions and service sites to support industries and foster sustainable development.

The placement of developments under county zoning could also negatively impact the quality of life for residents living near city boundaries. Poorly planned developments may restrict future transportation infrastructure and green space, creating isolated and less desirable neighborhoods. This would not only limit residential growth but also reduce the overall appeal and livability of the area.

Finally, differences between city and county zoning regulations can lead to inconsistent development over time. These inconsistencies pose challenges for cities when annexing areas, making it difficult to address variances and ensure cohesive urban planning. Maintaining the 3-mile zone helps align development standards, creating a seamless and well-organized framework for future growth.

In conclusion, the 3-mile extraterritorial zone authority is a vital tool for cities to manage growth, support economic development, and enhance the quality of life for residents. It ensures that infrastructure and community spaces are planned in a way that benefits everyone, now and in the future. I urge you to support the preservation of this important regulation to safeguard the long-term sustainability and prosperity of our cities.

Sincerely yours,

Nathaniel Blank, City of Liberal Government Affairs