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TO: Chairman Emil Bergquist
House Local Government Committee Members

FROM: Amy L. Lange, City Manager, Concordia

DATE: February 3, 2025

RE: Written Only - Testimony in Support to HB 2099 – Rental Inspections

Chairman Bergquist and Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2099 on behalf of the City of Concordia. Concordia has a long history of strong, informed, and common-sense leadership in our elected and appointed officials. We strive to ensure our community is a great place to live, work and play. This includes the City Commission's stated priorities of housing and property maintenance, supporting the health and vitality of our community, as well as implementation of practices that support these goals.

A few short years ago, the Kansas Legislature passed a bill that prohibited cities from enacting programs to perform periodic code enforcement inspections of rental properties. Presently, we may only perform inspections when invited into a residence by the tenant or landlord, or with the use of an administrative search warrant. While Concordia only has a few rental properties with subsidies, we view HB 2099 as a good first step to reinstating periodic code-compliance inspections of all rental properties.

Currently, the Concordia Fire / EMS Department performs annual code-compliance inspections of all commercial facilities and schools within the City. These inspections are performed to ensure the building is maintained in a safe condition with functional fire alarms, fire sprinklers (if applicable) and proper exiting in the event of an emergency. These inspections also provide an opportunity for Fire Department staff to plan for tactical operations if an emergency were to occur at that location. Additionally, Concordia's Building & Zoning Department staff inspect commercial and residential buildings upon completion of new construction and remodels to ensure code-compliance, meaning the building is safe for occupancy. Ideally, these departments would also inspect rental properties annually the same as commercial facilities, and at the time of an occupancy change, the same as when a remodel is complete, to confirm for the tenant and landlord that the residence is safe and ready for their habitation.

Concordia's residential market is over 30% rentals. We are fortunate to have many great landlords and property managers who work hard to ensure housing units are safe and maintained in good repairs. Unfortunately, we also have a few landlords and property managers who are not as diligent, and allow poor living conditions for some of our residents.

The Concordia City Commission and City staff believe everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to live. We also believe property owners should maintain their properties in such a way to be safe and functional, and to showcase pride in our community. Regular periodic inspection of rental properties is aligned with these community priorities.

With this testimony in mind, the City of Concordia strongly urges you to support HB 2099 and to continue to support safe, healthy and affordable housing for the residents of our community. Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Amy Lange".

Amy L. Lange
City Manager