



TESTIMONY OF THE KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
TO THE HOUSE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
ON HB 2639
FEBRUARY 14, 2012

Chairman Huebert and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Association of Counties opposes HB 2639.

Last year KAC worked with solid waste companies towards compromise legislation intended to include private waste management companies in the process when counties decide their waste management plan. We supported HB 2195 last year even though it required more paperwork and delayed the implementation time for a county trash plan.

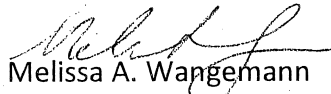
Now we have HB 2639 this year without any notice. This bill requires more paperwork and more work for municipalities that want to provide their citizens with solid waste services.

The bill makes it "unlawful" for any municipality to engage in solid waste services without first taking bids from the private sector. We have to publish the private company's bids, publish information about the municipality's waste management service, hold public hearings, maintain segregated and audited financial reports, and most importantly, local government is completely prohibited from engaging in solid waste services if a private company can do it at a lower price. The bill appears to focus only on who has the lowest price and not necessarily the level of services provided to the public.

Clearly the purpose of the legislation is to remove government from the business of providing trash service. On its face the argument may seem sensible that, if a private company can do it cheaper government should not provide the service. However, the analysis really cannot stop at this first step. What's to say this bill isn't really about driving government out of the trash business and after the local government has sold off its assets and equipment, the private company raises prices on all the customers? Will the private company provide recycling when customers request it? Will the private company pick up storm damage and used appliances? There is a reason for government to be in the business of solid waste management sometimes – it's to ensure there is competition and a level of services that meets the customers' needs.

I appreciate the opportunity submit testimony in opposition to the bill, and would be happy to answer questions.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa A. Wangemann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Melissa A. Wangemann
General Counsel & Director of Legislative Services