

Chairman Hubert and members of the Committee on Local Government.

I want to first thank you for this opportunity to appear before your committee.

I am here today to present opposition to HB 2639 on behalf of the City of Parsons. Parsons has provided solid waste services to its citizens for several decades and takes pride in the fact that those services are provided at a reasonable cost determined by the locally elected Governing Body.

Prior to the opening of the solid waste transfer station in the Year 2007 the city of Parsons delivered its waste to the Montgomery County landfill operation. Labette County and the Municipalities therein recognized the significant costs associated with travelling that far individually, and

formed a cooperative effort to identify and implement a more cost affective approach to handling solid waste that is generated within all of Labette County. From those efforts and through the approval of Inter-local agreements the Labette County Solid Waste Management Committee brought forth a contract that provides for the operation of a solid waste transfer station that receives solid waste that is delivered by both public and private solid waste operations within all of Labette County and beyond. This operation reduced costs for those participants and continues to handle the solid waste that is generated. For the calendar year, 2011, that was 16,695 tons of which Parsons generated 7,549.39 tons.

The proposed legislation attacks one of the most sacred governmental standards that there is. The right of

local control. As demonstrated above with the formation of a County wide approach to providing solid waste collection for multiple municipalities and the whole of Labette County, local governments can and do think and act responsibly. The rights of local governments to provide services should never be challenged by specific legislation such as proposed in HB 2639. This legislation is saying that local governments cannot function as reasonable and efficient structures without specific guidelines being forced down their throats by perhaps well intended proposals but misguided and unreasonable standards. This legislation assumes that local governments do not consider all options when evaluating the “best” approach to services that are provided to the local citizens. That assumption is simply wrong and misdirected.

Municipalities are required to prepare independent audits

for each fiscal period. The preparation of those audits are contracted services and are typically provided by local or area accounting firms that are required to follow audit standards set forth by the State of Kansas. To establish a 120 day audit completion date will only drive the cost of preparing the specific audit and is a needless standard.

The audit for the free standing Parsons Sanitation

Department started on Monday February 13, 2012, and is part of the general audit for all funds. The field work is usually completed within a week and the final report will be presented to the Governing Body sometime in the first part of May. This is an appropriate schedule for preparing the annual audit of all funds. The Sanitation Fund operates as a separate free standing utility fund. To subject the operation to standards as detailed in Sections 4 (b) (c) (d)

(e) would result in a false picture of the funds true operation. For example, municipalities actively search out grants to support or begin new operations and would be penalized by the language provided in HB 2639.

HB 2639 as written is and should be an unacceptable intrusion of local governments authority to govern themselves. I can assure you that local governments do consider services that private companies provide and will not hesitate to contract for services if the local citizens can benefit.

Before closing I would like to read a portion of the 2010 State Solid Waste Management Plan. The Plan is prepared by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment , Bureau of Waste Management and reads “The vision” presented in this chapter of the Kansas Solid Waste Plan maintains the long-standing KDHE and legislative

philosophy that local governments working through the county and regional planning process will continue to decide their own waste management method(s) based upon local needs, resources, and preferences.” Page 26, Chap 4

I encourage you to stop HB 2639 from moving to the House Chamber. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Fred Gress
City Manager
City of Parsons, Ks