

To: Senator Pyle and Members of the Ethics, Elections, and Local Government Committee

From: K. Vance Kelley, AIA

RE: Opposition to HB 2118

I would like to thank you for allowing me to appear before the Committee and provide testimony in opposition to HB 2118.

I'm Vance Kelley, a fourth generation Kansan, and I help represent Kansas on the Board of Advisors to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. For those of you who are not familiar with the work the National Trust for Historic Preservation, they are a privately funded national organization working to educate the public about the importance of preserving America's historic places. The National Trust has demonstrated its commitment to communities in Kansas and across the country with the creation of programs assisting with Main Streets, rural preservation, and heritage tourism.

I am here to offer my assistance to you as you address the issue of "environs" review and the concerns voiced by some Kansas communities. As a nation-wide organization the National Trust has the opportunity to compare the preservation statutes and incentives programs across America. With this broad perspective, they understand the obstacles and opportunities provided within the Kansas Preservation Statute. Based on this broad perspective, we believe there is value to the "environs" review process. However, we also understand the frustration periodically voiced with its interpretation and implementation.

During the past 25 years the National Trust has been periodically been asked to work with representatives of the Kansas Legislature, the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office, Certified Local Governments, and with individuals as they deal with the process of complying with the environs review component of the law. You will hear from or have heard from both sides of the argument. Most represent a logical view of the law. However, I am concerned that because it is easy to generalize the extreme views of both sides of the argument, it may seem easy to solve this issue by simply eliminating the "environs" review component of the State Preservation Statute.

I strongly suggest that in lieu of passing HB 2118, you will consider asking the State Historic Preservation Officer to address the issues you have heard today through its Rules and Regulations. Through such a public process the State Historic Preservation Office can further define the environs component of the law and clarify the standards and guidelines used for the review. If you agree to this compromise, I will commit to working with you, the State Historic Preservation Office, and Kansas communities to address the concerns you have heard today in a public process that will result in a fair and reasonable solution.

Please let me know if I can help you resolve this issue without passing HB 2118.

K. Vance Kelley, AIA

Kansas Advisor – National Trust for Historic Preservation