



February 28, 2015

Mr. Brunk,

I have been a full-time artist and building owner in downtown Wichita for over 20 years. I've had major solo exhibitions in both the Wichita Art Museum and The Beach Museum at KSU. I am also a co-founder of *Fisch Haus*, one of the most well-known artist-run organizations in Kansas, which has been providing free cultural events for the Wichita community since the group's inception in 1990. In 2011, Fisch Haus was honored with a large retrospective exhibition at WSU's Ulrich Museum.

Among the most visible achievements of Fisch Haus, and one that the City of Wichita has publicly lauded as a successful cultural and economically-beneficial attraction, is called 'Final Fridays'. Final Fridays is a city-wide gallery crawl occurring on the last Friday evening of each month; and, in the Commerce Street Art District, much more than just open galleries--it is a meeting of artists, musicians and performers that regularly attracts 1000-3000 participants. The cultural benefits of events such as this seem obvious, but even to someone who may not understand the value of art and culture in a community, the economic value is undeniable. Local business owners are aware that the people who show up for Final Friday, as well as for the numerous events Fisch Haus produces throughout the rest of the year, also support the peripheral restaurants and bars that same evening.

I, and my colleagues, have literally spent half our lives building a thriving art community here on Commerce street, an area that was essentially abandoned when we purchased our building in 1994. Not only the careers of all of Wichita's artists, but also our city's health, will be significantly influenced by the bill you are discussing today. Local and state governments frequently offer tax incentives to large businesses to enrich the economic power of their community. I believe it is time for a similar gesture to be made to the hard-working and passionate people that generate both economic and cultural growth. There is a precedent in other progressive communities for similar tax abatements, and they have yielded quantifiable dividends.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Duegaw", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Patrick Duegaw