



Hamilton County Economic Development

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HB 2298 - Removing the Sunset for the Rural Opportunity Zones Program

Prepared for the House Taxation Committee

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Room 582-N, The Statehouse

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Hamilton County Economic Development strongly supports the extension of the Rural Opportunity Zone program. Our community has benefitted significantly from utilizing the program to recruit young families and professionals to our area.

Currently Hamilton County has 16 active ROZ student-loan repayment participants. These individuals have 10 children and the total number of individuals in their collective households is 29. ROZ has been an important strategic investment in the future of our community. To date Hamilton County has had 31 applications, 11 of which were from out of state. In addition to the 16 approved applications, there are 5 more applications pending. Applicant occupations have included engineering, healthcare, utility, education, finance, accounting, agriculture and management. 42% of the applicants were educated out of state and were looking for an opportunity to return or relocate to Hamilton County and Kansas.

9 of Hamilton County's approved program participants completed the recent ROZ Survey conducted by the Kansas Department of Commerce which yielded the following results.

- 8 of 9 (88.9%) said ROZ was a contributing factor in their decision to move to Hamilton County and remain living there.
- 5 of 9 (55.6%) said they had built or were purchasing a home in Hamilton County.
- 1 of the 9 (11.1%) said they had started or purchased a business in Hamilton County.

For Hamilton County these numbers are significant and the talent represented by these individuals will continue to pay dividends for years to come. We strongly support the renewal of the Rural Opportunity Zones program that helps bring primarily young, educated productive residents to rural communities statewide.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of assistance. I may be reached by phone at (620)384-7317 or by email at hmcocecon@gmail.com.