

State of Kansas
House of Representatives

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Mike Houser
Representative, 1st District

Chairman KleeB and members of the House Taxation Committee, I come before you today in favor of HB2298. During the session last year I was successful in lobbying the legislature for the addition of my home county, Cherokee, and three other counties to the list of those making up the Rural Opportunity Zones. I felt it would be a good tool to use in attracting new people to move into our rural community. My opinion of the program has not changed. To date, I am unaware of any applicants that have chosen to benefit from the plan. I asked the Dept. of Revenue for some data but they were unable to supply any concerning my county. Regardless, I know it has been successful in other counties so far and would like the opportunity to offer it to new Kansas residents in the future.

In light of developments inside my district over the last ten months, I would like to see this program be available until such time that our state income tax rates reach zero. In the last few months, the 1st District has seen a tornado take away several homes in Baxter Springs and just over a week ago Baxter Springs lost a major retailer. We held an economic development panel discussion in Baxter Springs last week to brainstorm ways we could entice people to move back into the area and the ROZ program was at the top of the list. This program is fiscally neutral to the state, but would be positive to the counties and cities within the zones as much needed sales and property taxes would be collected locally. It is for that reason I stand in favor of HB2298 and ask you to remove the sunset date on the ROZ program. Let's keep all the tools we have to attract new people into our communities to stay.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Houser', with a stylized, cursive script.

Representative Mike Houser

1st District, Cherokee County