



"Where Community Counts."

March 3, 2016

To: Chairman Marvin Kleebe, House Taxation Committee
From: Mayor Clair Donnelly, Maize Kansas *eed*
Subject: Written Testimony Supporting HB 2609

I support League of Municipalities position regarding the proposed tax lid legislation (HB 2609 - support). I wanted you to know the concept of this bill maintains our ability to govern our cities. Home rule is crucial to cities. We are the people who live and work with our citizens. We hear on a daily basis what our citizens want from our city.

I feel that HP 2609 does allow for home rule and citizen input. I hope the Committee recommends this legislation.

Maize has done an excellent job providing services to our citizens while keeping the mill levy down. I am attaching the position paper that we submitted regarding SB 316 (opposed). Although it doesn't directly speak to our support of HB 2609 it provide a good overview of our city's tax history.



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Tax Lid for Cities in the State of Kansas

Sounds Reasonable? Not really.

The State Legislature developed a bill that would put a tax lid on cities and limit growth to the inflation rate annually. Sounds reasonable? Not really. Cities, such as Maize, Kansas, that are growing rapidly with urgent needs for expanded service would pay the price.

Tax Rate History for Maize, Kansas

The City of Maize has worked hard to maintain or decrease the mill levy while expanding services to accommodate rapid growth over the past ten years. Projects include:

- Construction of a multi-million dollar five-lane curb and gutter roadway on Maize Road necessitated by our location between Wichita and the K-96 Interchange.
- \$1.3 million flood control system to protect Maize homes from flooding.
- Several additional miles of roadway have been paved and are maintained yearly.
- A new City Hall and Recreation Center has been constructed.
- A complete upgrade of the City Park, including a new Splash park & restrooms.
- A new Public Works facility is underway.
- Tripled land area in the City (over 96% by request of property owners).
- Population was 2,500 ten years ago and is now estimated to be 4,200. Additionally, over 500 apartment units are planning to be in Maize over the next two years.
- The opening of the Maize Industrial Park with access to both rail and highway.
- The building of over 500 new homes.
- Over 300 new jobs have been added to Maize.

Budget Year	Mill Levy **	% Change
2007	41.321	
2008 *	43.251	4.7%
2009	43.022	-0.5%
2010	42.427	-1.4%
2011	43.323	2.1%
2012	43.132	-0.4%
2013	42.868	-0.6%
2014	43.270	0.9%
2015	43.030	-0.6%
2016	43.036	0.0%

*** In 2008 a new City Hall was constructed. The old building was returned to the USD 266 and replaced with a parking lot and driveway.**

**** Mill levies are estimated at budget adoption time and are finalized once the assessed values are finalized in fall of the same year.**

How was all this accomplished?

- The City Council had a vision that Maize would grow due to our quality Public Schools (USD 266), our location and proximity to the activity in northwest Wichita.
- Long range planning for expanded infrastructure, specifically roads, water, and sewer needs has been conducted. Professionals were hired to analyze activity and provide the necessary advice to properly plan for public services.
- Strong financial planning with the commitment to keep the mill levy rate constant or reduced.
- This has been accomplished regardless of the projects undertaken.

“The concept of this bill ... will only serve to complicate, interfere and stifle the proven growth pattern for the City of Maize and other cities around the State.”

Maize is in-tune with our Citizens’ and Businesses’ needs:

When the housing market took a downturn, The City of Maize led the way. Developers were going under and builders were sitting on vacant homes. To save the developers and builders, Maize established the Housing Incentive Grant Program allowing a refunding of the City of Maize taxes back to the homeowners over a 10-year period. Once again, this was done without raising the mill levy. Not only did our developers survive, they flourished.

City of Maize Position:

There have been two bills drafted for this legislative session:

HB 2493 - Repeals the tax lid. The City of Maize **SUPPORTS** this bill in its current form.

SB 316 - Accelerates the tax lid implementation. The City of Maize **OPPOSES** this bill.

It is unworkable in terms of budget/elections/taxation for these reasons: 1) The timing of the election would have to occur before the budget numbers are sent from the County and State. 2) The growth limited to inflation. This would cripple Maize; one of the most successful small cities in the State in terms of growth and job creation.

The City of Maize is one of the fastest growing communities in the State with a proven record of fiscal responsibility. Our City enjoys a good relationship with our residents, who also enjoy a stable lifestyle with open communication with local government.

The tax lid bill, being discussed, is nothing more than an open over-reach by State government. If a State Representative is having a problem with a city in his/her district then deal with it individually.

Do not create an unnecessary burden on all cities by creating State government interference. The concept of this bill creates a crippling, unwarranted State intervention that will only serve to complicate, interfere and stifle the proven growth pattern for the City of Maize and other cities around the State.

Listen to the Cities and their concerns, which are real, not the lobbyists who have no skin in the game.