

February 14, 2016

To the Chairman and Members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee. Topeka. Kansas
Regarding Senate Bill SB 425

We became citizens of Kansas in 1957. We were young and loved to hike in natural areas. Because we could find no accessible area for this in Douglas County, we were fortunate to find an unusual 40-acre tract of land northwest of Lawrence that was wooded and had an interesting topography for sale at an affordable price, which we immediately purchased. In 2002 we donated this 40 acres to the City of Lawrence, but before doing so we contacted the Kansas Land Trust to obtain a Conservation Easement to ensure that the land would remain in as natural a state as possible, while allowing public access and pedestrian trails. Our City then acquired adjacent properties in the area to establish a Nature Park of more than 90 acres of land the trails of which are constantly now being used, according to our observations.

We selected the Kansas Land Trust to establish the Easement because the choice was ours and we could determine what conditions we wished to place on the Easement. This is the standard procedure for the Kansas Land Trust, an organization that is a great asset to our State. The major and extremely important advantage of the Kansas Land Trust is that it is a State-wide organization with a predictable operating system and goals that allow uniform administration of easements but according to the agreements of the landowners. Because our counties vary so widely in administration and governance and some land ownerships extend beyond county boundaries, we are greatly concerned that Bill SB 425 would change the whole purpose and operation of the Kansas Land Trust and eliminate its desperately needed effectiveness. We strongly urge you and members of the Senate not to pass this bill. Thank you for considering our letter.

Respectfully,



Robert W. Lichtwardt



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