

February 10, 2020

To: Kansas State House of Representatives

Topeka, Ks

From: Brian T. Habjan

19075 Cantrell Rd.

Linwood, Ks 66052

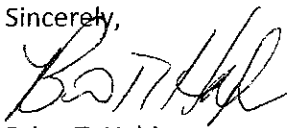
Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to bring your attention to an issue that I feel needs to be corrected. It deals with taxation of real estate taxes being charge on buildings that were destroyed by tornadoes and other disasters. On May 28, 2019, my house, property, and farm were hit by an EF4 tornado in southern Leavenworth County. In addition to loosing most every tree on my property, most of my fences getting destroyed, my three outbuildings/barns were destroyed. For clarification purposes, of those three barns/outbuildings one was build in the 1970's prior to my owning the property, one was built around 2008, and the large 30'x50' barn was just built in 2016. So, all varying methods on construction and age, but all were lost and had to be rebuilt. Luckily, and amazingly my house only had outside cosmetic damage, due to Tornado turning exactly between my house and barns. Any one of the mature trees I lost, could have been thrown thru my house, but I am very lucky that they did not do more damage.

I am testifying today to help those who may ever be in my spot get some tax relief. If my house had been destroyed, unfortunately like so many of my neighbors' houses were, I could apply and be granted a property tax abatement by Leavenworth County Commission for the property taxes on my house. However, as the law is currently, I am not able to apply for a tax abasement on my outbuildings and barns. Due to the timing of this devastating storm and tornado being at the end of May. Many of the barn builders and construction companies were already booked for new projects for the entire summer and fall. This this puts a person on a waiting list to be rebuilt. So, I had to pay the entire years' worth of Real estate taxes on barns/outbuildings that I could not use. I was finally able to get a barn builder to rebuild my barn right before the end on the year. However, I am still waiting to add the concrete to the barn and finish the electrical work, over 8 months later.

If you have never been thru a natural disaster like a tornado, I am not sure you can understand the devastation it can cause. There were many groups of people who came to help our community of Linwood, and for that help we are grateful. Still today there are some who have not been able to rebuild or fix all of their properties. I am asking you to fix this problem, change the state law that our County Commission is being hand cuffed with, to help out those in need with a little property tax relief.

Sincerely,



Brian T. Habjan