



RENO COUNTY COMMISSION  
206 West First Avenue  
Hutchinson, Kansas 67501  
620-694-2929

---

To: Chairman Johnson and House Taxation Committee Members  
From: Reno County Commissioners  
Date: March 16, 2020

On behalf of the Reno County Commission, we wanted the House Taxation Committee members to know that Reno County opposes Senate Bill 294. As a commission, we strive to be conservative with taxpayer dollars and do not want to tax people anymore than is required to provide the services that the citizens have asked from the Reno County government. The bill does sunset the current property tax lid, but in doing so creates additional problems that harm municipal governments and the taxpayers. Below is a list of some of our concerns with Senate Bill 294.

- Refunds of tax payments that are for pennies would still cost entities more in the processing of a check and postage than the refund to a taxpayer. The bill needs to be amended to provide for the funds to be escrowed and returned on the next year's tax statement.
- Taxing entities are unable to predict changes that take place between July 1<sup>st</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup> in valuations, which is a reason that a bill should focus on the taxes levied in dollars, not a mill levy. All taxing entities use the July 1<sup>st</sup> estimated valuation to determine the taxes required to fund an approved budget. During this time, property values can change based on protests at the Board of Tax Appeals and the County Clerk then sets a certified valuation by November 1<sup>st</sup>, which may be different than the July 1<sup>st</sup> amount. Taxing entities are not given the opportunity to then make changes to their adopted budget based on this potential change in valuation. The mill levy adjusts to maintain the adopted tax levy amount.
- The bill states transparency as an issue. Taxing entities already must publish the budget meetings for public hearings at least 10 days prior to a meeting in an effort to allow for concerned citizens to be present. In our experience, the transparency is there, and tax increases do not take place behind closed doors. They take place as the cost of business continues to rise, for example commodity prices and personnel costs don't stay flat forever.
- Reno County does not have the required information readily available being required to put in the notices to the taxpayers. Each parcel would have to be researched separately and manually to put the information together. The other alternative based on the bill would be for us to ask our software vendor to create a report with all that information at an added cost to the taxpayers. Reno County has approximately 80 taxing entities with 10 that cross county lines and we would have to get and give that information from other counties as needed. We are then at their mercy of getting the information needed to get notices mailed out. Reno County does not have the money budgeted to mail out all the notices. Even if we get the money back, the refunds do not go back into our expense budgets to offset the cost. In addition, Reno County is the home county for South Central Kansas Library and that encompasses 13 other counties. If this entity would ask for more money that could potentially result in close to 80,000 letters that would have to be mailed out. This point is to help explain the magnitude of work and change required by this bill that is an added cost to the taxpayers that may not impact whether a taxing entity raises taxes.

---

Ron Sellers  
District 1

Ron Hirst  
District 2

Bob Bush  
District 3