

To: House Taxation Committee
From: Trey Cocking, Deputy Director
Date: February 17, 2021
RE: Neutral Testimony on HB 2197

Good Afternoon Chairman and Committee Members and thank you for allowing the League of Kansas Municipalities to offer neutral testimony on House Bill 2197.

The policy behind HB 2197 is a solid policy that seeks to give relief to the owner of a property that has been hit by a disaster.

Our concern with the bill is that cities are compact in size and when natural disasters do occur there is a chance that a major portion of the city could be impacted. In 2007, the Greensburg tornado destroyed 95% of the property in the city. Under this bill, the City of Greensburg would have lost all its property tax revenue in 2008. The city would have been hard pressed to support the services that were needed to rebuild their city, maintain order, and restore quality of life.

Last year, when a similar bill was introduced in the House, the League worked with the proponents of the bill to develop language that would allow a city to be exempted from the provisions of this bill if more than 25% of the real property in the city was damaged. We would ask the following paragraph to be added:

Section 1(e) [p.3, following line 36] For any city that has 25% or more of the total parcels of property damaged, the city may object by passage of a resolution and retain its portion of the abated taxes. A city may object by resolution within 14 days after notification by the county commission that the county has decided to abate such taxes. The city's portion of property taxes shall be abated if the city fails to object within 14 days.

We believe that this change will allow property owners to receive much needed relief and will allow cities to continue functioning following a major disaster.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today and ask that House Bill 2197 be amended before it is passed out.