



PO BOX 352, RUSSELL, KS 67665

PO Box 352
370 WEST WICHITA AVENUE
RUSSELL, KS 67665
785-483-3144 PHONE
785-483-6020 FAX

Testimony to the Senate Commerce Committee

In Support of S.B. 90

February 10, 2021

Chairman Olson and members of the committee:

I am writing this testimony in support of SB 90 due to the much-needed benefit it will provide to rural communities. Central business districts in rural communities have been in decline for decades. As long-standing retail businesses within rural communities close, rarely are they replaced by new retail businesses. Over time, more and more buildings on Main Street sit empty and begin to deteriorate. As a result, communities have to develop creative ways to reinvigorate their central business districts.

One potential use for these empty buildings is the conversion to residential housing units. The Russell community is currently exploring the conversion of its only three-story downtown building into loft-style apartments. The community is severely lacking in housing for young professionals. As a result, many of these young people live in neighboring communities and drive into Russell for their employment. When jobs open up in those neighboring communities, those individuals permanently leave both our work force and our community. Suitable housing is a necessary requirement for attracting young professionals to the community.

The ability to create a Rural Housing Incentive District (RHID) for this project would make this project financially feasible. Without an RHID, it is likely that this project will never come to fruition, and the building in question will continue to be a blight on our central business district.

For these reasons, I believe this legislation is a much-needed solution for the revitalization for rural communities in Kansas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrea Krug Krauss".

Andrea Krug Krauss
Secretary/Treasurer