

To: Senate Local Government Committee

From: John Goodyear, General Counsel

Date: March 3, 2022

RE: Opponent Testimony on SB 510

We want to thank Chairwoman McGinn and the members of the Committee for affording the League of Kansas Municipalities the opportunity to provide testimony opposing SB 510.

Vacant properties present real problems for our communities. The longer a property is left vacant, the greater the possibility that it will fall into a state of disrepair or become a target for property crimes or criminal behavior. Vacant structures are often more likely to be subject to break-ins and fires. Cities have utilized registries to better monitor vacant commercial and residential properties to try to stave off or prevent some of these deleterious effects.

In addition to the public safety reasons for requiring registry, there are also economic reasons. Deterioration of structures leads to blight that lowers the value of neighboring properties and acts as a hindrance to development. A registration requirement and an associated fee may also incentivize the use or sale of properties. We hear all the time about housing issues in Kansas, but we have cities where property owners choose to leave a structure vacant instead of selling it or putting it to use.

When cities enact ordinances, they are acting locally to address local problems. Not every city makes use of a registration ordinance or fees for vacant properties, but a number of cities across the country and in Kansas have taken this action because they have recognized a problem in their community and have identified registration as a way to help address economic and public safety concerns.

The League is opposed to SB 510 and would ask this Committee to not recommend it favorably for passage.