Senate Local Government Committee
March 21, 2023
HB 2083

Kansas Association of Counties
Opponent Testimony

Chairwoman McGinn and members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing the Kansas Association of Counties to offer opponent testimony on HB 2083, which would pre-empt local governments, including counties, from imposing fees or mandatory registration requirements on vacant or unoccupied properties.

The Kansas Association of Counties and its member counties oppose pre-emptive legislation as an invasion of local control. KAC believes that government closest to the people can best meet the needs of the community.

Vacant or abandoned properties can create problems for counties, ranging from crime to public safety. Fires, infestation of rodents, dangerous structures, and other issues can arise when a property is not occupied. Counties have a responsibility to their residents to ensure that these types of issues are identified and mitigated.

HB 2083 would take away one such tool by preventing counties from requiring owners of vacant properties to register or otherwise pay fees for vacant properties. One of the challenges with vacant and unoccupied properties is locating the owner when there are problems with the property, such as failure to maintain the property and existing structures or address potential dangers on the property. HB 2083 pre-empts counties and cities from addressing these very real issues, creating potential dangers to the public.

It is important to note that most property owners are not impacted by this because they either live at their property or actively rent or lease those premises. HB 2083 could potentially create more problems than it may solve by disincentivizing absentee owners to maintain their property, which would pose an even greater risk to the public.

KAC would respectfully ask the committee to reject this legislation as an invasion of local control. Thank you.

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