



THE CITY OF PRAIRIE VILLAGE
STAR OF KANSAS

TO: House Committee on Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development
FROM: Jamie Robichaud, Deputy City Administrator, City of Prairie Village, KS
SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of HB 2314
DATE: Friday, February 22, 2019

The City of Prairie Village **strongly supports** HB 2314, which streamlines and expedites the process for local governments to deal with the blight of abandoned, nuisance, and foreclosed housing to protect the rights and property values of surrounding property owners.

This issue affects many communities in Kansas, and Prairie Village is one of them. Cities currently have tools available to address issues when a dangerous structure is involved, but we have very limited resources to deal with abandoned structures under current state law. For example, in 2018 Prairie Village spent approximately 950 employee hours on five abandoned residential properties in an effort to gain compliance with our property maintenance codes. That equates to approximately \$25,000 just in one year, and those properties still are not in compliance. These properties have been in and out of our municipal court system for several years with no end in sight due to state law not giving cities the authority we need to efficiently and effectively address these issues. This results in repeated violations in municipal court, frustration from surrounding property owners, and thousands of taxpayer dollars being spent on staff time without any resolution to the issues at hand. Cities are currently handcuffed by state law, which prohibits us from productively resolving these issues.

HB 2314 would give cities the same ability to deal with abandoned and blighted real estate as we now have when dealing with dangerous structures. This legislation is certainly needed to protect the property values for adjacent landowners and protect our code enforcement officers from dangerous conditions. Abandoned property affects the health, safety, and the welfare of the entire community, including property owners and residents of rental property. Abandoned properties can also result in unpaid property taxes, which in turn creates a higher tax burden on other property owners for government resources. Municipalities should have the ability to proactively address abandoned properties **before** these properties become dangerous and threaten the safety and welfare of our residents.

The City of Prairie Village urges you to support HB 2314. Thank you for your consideration.