



Date: February 7, 2013

To: House Local Government Committee

From: Larry R. Baer
Legal Counsel

Re: HB 2075
Testimony in Support

Thank you for allowing me to appear before you today and present testimony in support of House Bill 2075 on behalf of the League of Kansas Municipalities and its member cities.

HB 2075 would amend current law regarding abandoned structures by expanding the definition of abandoned property. The expanded definition would include residential property that has been vacant for at least 180 days and has a blighting influence upon the surrounding property. The amendment also includes a definition of "blighting influence". Existing law would also be amended to permit the rehabilitation of abandoned property to be used for community development or economic development purposes. A major change in the existing language would be to allow cities to petition the district court for an order of temporary possession of property. This would be done in the same fashion as now permitted of "qualified organizations".

Because of recent and, in some locations, continuing downturns in the economy, cities are seeing more properties standing vacant. Too often, this leads to the structures falling into disrepair or becoming sanctuaries for vagrants or the homeless. Failure to pay property taxes is also a result. As these properties fall further into disrepair, they have a blighting effect upon the surrounding properties and the potential to become dangerous structures as they continue to deteriorate.

Cities have long had tools available to them to address issues when a dangerous structure is involved, but they have had limited resources to deal with abandoned property. HB 2075 would give cities the same ability to deal with abandoned and blighted real estate as they now have when dealing with dangerous structures. HB 2075 would allow rehabilitation action to be taken before the property became a "dangerous structure".

Thank you for allowing me to testify on this matter. We ask for your support of HB 2075 and that you pass it out favorably.

I will be happy to stand for questions.