

City of Baxter Springs

**Randall Trease, Mayor *Debbie Weston, City Clerk*

*1445 Military Ave.
P.O. Box 577
Baxter Springs, KS 66713*

To: Senate Ethics, Elections and Local Government Committee
From: Dawn Reeser, Utility Clerk, City of Baxter Springs, KS
Subject: SB 31 Testimony in Support

The City of Baxter Springs, KS is a town rich in history. Our town began as a stopover for Native Tribes, who used the areas abundant springs to refresh and replenish themselves on their long hunting expeditions. Later, this area was used as a military post for Union soldiers during the Civil War. At the turn of the century the cattle industry exploded, and with herds needing to be moved long distances, Baxter Springs boomed to life as the First Cowtown in Kansas. And finally, as America grew and her citizens took to the road, Baxter Springs sat proudly on Route 66, The Mother Road.

But, as has happened in so many small towns across America, industries dried up, businesses closed down, and what was once a torrent of growth slowed to a trickle. Property owners, who were unsuccessful in filling commercial and residential property, boarded up and left town. Lost revenue from these empty store fronts, and with little recourse to make the properties useful again, cities were left with neighborhoods full of blighted property and downtown streets filled with boarded windows.

We need legislation that supports a city government's right to make property owners be responsible for their assets, and the power to remove the burden of responsibility from the owner's shoulders if they refuse to acknowledge it. Towns die when those in authority are not granted the power to hold its citizens, its business owners, and each other, accountable. Please look at some examples from our town and help us stop the disintegration of our historical homes and businesses. Give us the tools to make Baxter Springs beautiful once again.

Respectfully,
Dawn Reeser

City Council Members

**Carl Ikenberry*Laurie Alquist*Jimmy Younger*Steve Dardenne*Sherri Howey*Gary Sisco*Sherry Brown
*Dustin Andrews*Robert Myers, Attorney*Deann Hill, Treasurer*











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