



To whom it may concern,

Chairman Kelly and members of the committee, thank you for your consideration of House Bill 2569. I am writing to offer enthusiastic support of the bill on behalf of Emporia Main Street, whose mission is to sustain and grow Emporia's local economy through jobs creation, tourism, and business support.

Emporia is a city of 25,000 that has become the Disc Golf and Gravel Grinding Capital of the World. Downtown Emporia, which welcomes 50,000 visitors each year, is one of our greatest economic assets. In 2016, Emporia was voted "Best Main Street" in the United States by USA Today.

In 2005, Emporia adopted a Community Initiated Development program, a multi-phase process for identifying the community's needs. Our Master Plan highlighted the need to focus on revitalizing existing areas for a mixture of uses, and historic preservation resources were cited as a critical component of the redevelopment process. The economics of development for most smaller communities with static or declining populations require an emphasis on fully utilizing preexisting infrastructure through redevelopment processes. Our Community Initiated Development plan created an emphasis on core redevelopment because of the positive tax implications long term, and discouraged sprawl and its negative consequences on the tax base.

Like most small cities, Emporia does not typically attract big-city developers. Instead, we have found success in empowering local developers with staff support from the City and Emporia Main Street. Because Emporia Main Street works on the front lines of these projects, we see firsthand the shortcomings of existing incentives programs. Improving the tax credit, expediting the time frame for review, and prioritizing this powerful economic development tool for commercial and mixed-use projects in Kansas communities can help accelerate growth in a sustainable way. HB 2569 will positively impact entrepreneurial activities, housing, and the sustainability of existing businesses in our Kansas communities.

Thank you for empowering Kansas entrepreneurs and developers in combating blight and creating opportunities through efforts like HB 2569. We appreciate your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Casey Woods". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Casey Woods  
Executive Director, Emporia Main Street

**First Kansas Great American Main Street Award Winner!**