



March 6th, 2023

TO: Senate Committee on Local Government
FROM: Chief DeGraffenreid, City of Olathe
SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of HB 2323

Growing cities in Johnson County are important to the Kansas economy. HB 2323 provides a consistent process for detachment of fire district property after annexation by a city. As important, it helps assure local taxpayers are treated fairly and equitably by paying for the service they receive.

The governing bodies of cities and fire districts will continue to work together to transfer annexed fire district land to cities. HB 2323 provides a reasonable timeline for both negotiated and automatic detachment.

We are supportive of HB 2323 as it provides developers in annexed areas a clear understanding of the fire protection and service provider going forward. In addition, it encourages early dialogue between cities and fire districts in the negotiation process.

Following the House Committee hearing, we worked with Rep. Essex and Johnson County to address the concerns Johnson County raised in their testimony at that hearing, resulting in the proposed amendments Johnson County is presenting to this Committee. We support these amendments and ask that you adopt them and advance the bill, as amended, to the Senate.

In conclusion, HB 2323 is important for the following reasons:

Efficiency and Equity: Timely detachment allows more efficient municipal service delivery, giving all taxpayers more and better services for their tax dollars. While this bill ensures rural fire districts are made financially whole for debt incurred while serving properties, it also ensures taxpayers are not paying a very substantial mill levy for a service they do not receive.

Uniformity: The City should be a single point of contact for municipal regulations and services in annexed areas. When annexed areas are detached, there is less confusion about the services and mill levies of the various special purpose districts.

Timeliness: A reasonable one year timeline is important for residents and developers. It eliminates confusion about the fire service provider and taxing entities.

For the above reasons we express our support of House Bill 2323 and ask that you advance the bill. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or if you would like further information.

Jeff G. DeGraffenreid
City of Olathe Fire Chief
jgdegraffenreid@olatheks.org
913-284-8535