Re: Opposition to SB 124 (Annexation Restrictions)

Chair Bowers and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the City of Manhattan, we oppose SB 124 due to the operational and fiscal impacts this bill would create for cities responsible for planning, infrastructure coordination, and service delivery. SB 124 would affect communities like Manhattan by restricting practical annexation tools Kansas cities use to manage growth.

From an administrative standpoint, annexation is an essential tool to ensure orderly development and to align land use decisions with infrastructure capacity, public-safety coverage, and long-range capital planning. When annexation authority is broadly constrained, growth pressures do not disappear; instead, they become harder and more costly to serve efficiently over time.

Additionally, Manhattan experiences "donut hole" conditions where unannexed tracts remain surrounded by, or functionally embedded within, the city's urbanizing area. These areas use city-supported systems—such as city roads that serve as primary access routes and the city's fire services. When such tracts remain unannexed, cities face a persistent mismatch: urban-level access and protection are expected, yet the properties do not contribute to the municipal revenue base that funds those services.

For these reasons, the City of Manhattan respectfully requests that SB 124 not be passed as introduced.

If the Committee elects to move the bill forward, the City strongly recommends amendments to: (1) narrow the bill to clearly defined problem cases rather than broad restrictions; (2) add clear definitions and objective standards to reduce disputes; and (3) include a service-alignment safe harbor where annexation is necessary to match boundaries to actual municipal service provision and infrastructure use.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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