

To: House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
From: Spencer Duncan, Government Affairs Director
Date: February 17, 2025
RE: HB 2297 – Permits for Racoon Ownership
Opponent – Verbal Testimony

Thank you to the Chair and members of the Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony. The League of Kansas Municipalities have no opposition to racoon ownership and appreciate the measured approach HB 2297 takes to regulation. Our opposition lies in two areas: eliminating local regulatory authority and a lack of local permitting ability. Please amend the bill or vote No.

LOCAL REGULATORY AUTHORITY

Section 1. (h) (1) Page 2, lines 23-26 removes all local authority to regulate anything related to racoons. This means cities could not regulate the number of racoons an individual could own in a residential neighborhood, institute codes related to size of area for living space for more than one animal or apply standards a community may have as it relates to general animal ownership.

Sixty-five years ago, Kansans approved Constitutional Home Rule, allowing cities to conduct their affairs to reflect the direct will of residents. The Constitutional directive is clear: citizens want local governments to make decisions that reflect their unique communities. This provision of HB 2297 contradicts the constitutional right of local self-governance by removing the ability of local officials to set the most basic of local rules for racoon ownership.

LOCAL LICENSING

The bill has no provisions for, nor does it allow local licensing. As with any animal, cities should have the authority to adopt a local license, with a moderate fee, for the sake of public safety. Local animal control and public safety departments need to know where the animals are located. Also, the fee supports costs associated with enforcing laws established by the state.

When a neighbor complains about a racoon, it will be local officials who immediately address the situation, not state officials. There is a cost to that for cities and need for local agencies to license and track the animals.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information.



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