



American Planning Association  
**Kansas Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

March 16, 2012

The Honorable Carl Holmes, Chair

House Standing Committee on Energy and Utilities

Re: Opposition to House Resolution 6018

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Chapter of the American Planning Association is a professional organization representing 365 professional planners, planning commissioners, and students across the state. The mission of the American Planning Association is to provide leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in community planning, promoting education and citizen empowerment, and providing the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change.

House Resolution 6018, as introduced, raises several concerns for our organization.

Planning in the U.S. is a tool for communities and citizens to shape growth and their future. It is guided by local residents, constrained by state law, and implemented by local elected officials. Planning informs how to build economic vitality and resiliency while maintaining and protecting community and property values.

Some communities have determined that sustainable development or smart growth reflect the values of their residents. In these communities, “sustainability” or “smart growth” is often short-hand for “long-term vitality” or “cost effective development.” For the City of Greensburg, a desire to rebuild as a model green community resulted in a Sustainable Comprehensive Master Plan, an effort that has been recognized nationally as a model for energy efficiency, redevelopment, and disaster recovery. This example illustrates how sustainable “green” development, driven by local residents, can be a force for positive change, independent of any covert efforts, extremism, or United Nations projects.

There are also three metropolitan planning organizations in Kansas that engage in regional planning projects, which may include regional visioning. The newest of these, the Flint Hills Regional Council

(FHRC), is working to address the common opportunities and threats facing Geary, Morris, Riley, and Pottawatomie counties and municipalities including Clay Center, Council Grove, Junction City, Manhattan, and Wamego. FHRC has been designed and directed by a steering committee of elected officials, and representatives of Chambers of Commerce, Kansas State University, and Fort Riley. FHRC has received a Sustainable Communities Grant to collaborate with its regional partners on preserving and promoting opportunities for jobs, housing, transportation, and ecology.

The professionals and citizens who work diligently to advance our communities through planning are not working to achieve a United Nations vision or to end private property ownership, to end private automobile ownership, or to redistribute wealth. They are dedicated public servants and neighbors who want the best for their communities.

Cities and counties in Kansas will differ on their goals for the future and the best way to achieve them. Some may choose to pursue sustainable development, some may choose smart growth, and some may choose to cooperate with other jurisdictions on regional concerns. The Kansas legislature should recognize and encourage our residents and communities to create plans based on public input and the democratic processes that surround our planning efforts. To that end, we ask that you not approve this resolution.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kansas Chapter, American Planning Association