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March 23, 2017

Date: March 23, 2017

To: Chairman Kristey Williams and House Local Government Committee Members

From: Jon Quinday, City Manager

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2404

Dear Chairman Williams and Committee Members,

The City of Russell has been addressing blighted property for many years. During my four years as City Manager more than twenty homes, after due process, have been ordered repaired or removed. Of those homes half have been absentee owners or deceased owners with no known relatives. All but one of those homes had to be razed and removed at the City's expense – ultimately the tax payers' expenses as the costs are rarely recouped.

I write today in support of HB 2404 as it will provide flexibility to cities when dealing with abandoned housing by allowing cities, after receiving proper authority, to work with community groups to rehabilitate certain abandoned homes. Such flexibility builds the public – private partnership, can be used to build trade skills through school programs, and can convert blighted property to safe affordable housing.

For these reasons the City of Russell requests you pass HB 2404 favorably out of committee and to the full House.