

Good afternoon, Lea. Thank you for letting me address you directly with concern about eliminating city sales tax of food items.

I am the Administrator for Benton, Kansas. We are a community of around 1,000 residents. Having the ability to utilize the full potential of our citizen elected sales tax has been an important tool for our budget building process.

Our sales tax revenue line currently represents 15.47% of our operating budget. This critical revenue source was approved by our electors to accomplish a few things:

- 1) To reduce the tax burden of local property taxes, especially on the retired and those effected by County valuations determined by sales comparables,
- 2) To help plan for the repair and installation of very common infrastructure that would otherwise be neglected or postponed,
- 3) To ensure that non-residents have financial input into the services that they use while in our taxing jurisdiction.

We are currently at a 1% local sales tax rate, and the passing of SB 248 would compel our governing body to:

- 1) Petition our electors to approve a 2% sales tax rate in order to replace that lost revenue line,
- 2) Increase our property tax rate in an atmosphere of inflation to resume basic services.

We will soon begin building our budget for the future of our citizens, and we ask that you leave the local sales tax rate food exemption to the decision of the local voters.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration with regards to SB 248.

Sincerely,

Matt Engels  
City Administrator  
City of Benton, KS