

January 18, 2023

[Senator/Representative]

300 SW 10th Ave, Room _____
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Dear [Senator/ Representative] _____,

The City of Bel Aire appreciates your continued support for legislative priorities that improve the quality of life of citizens in our community. We are one of the fastest growing cities in Kansas, because we are committed to maintaining the high quality of life our residents enjoy through careful local stewardship.

These priorities remain very important to our community, and we ask for your continued support in these specific areas during the 2023 session; ***protecting the current city-county revenue sharing formula, advocating for simplifying the property tax notification process, providing mental health funding for our region and, highlighting the need for improving K-254.*** We concur with the policy statements that the League of Kansas Municipalities and REAP provided to you regarding these topics. We also support their statements regarding **the need for municipal representation in Ground Water Management District 2 and the need to extend wastewater loans to 30 year terms instead of the current 20 year terms.**

This year Bel Aire has identified the following important emerging areas and respectfully requests your help through legislation:

1. **K254 Public Infrastructure:** Voice your support for the progress of the K-254 corridor management study beginning in 2023. Your support is key to helping ensure the K-254 project is included in the development pipeline for the IKE Transportation Plan. Studies have shown that regional and local growth for southcentral Kansas are tied to improving the safety and infrastructure of K-254.
2. **County Fire Districts:** Change State statutes to require that fire district board representatives live in the area served by the fire district they represent. Currently, the county fire district representatives are county commissioners who may or may not be served by the fire district they represent. This change would allow for direct representation --whether elected or appointed, decisions should be made by the people who are directly impacted by the performance and efficacy of their fire districts.
3. **Advisory Questions on Electorate Ballots:** Pass legislation allowing municipal governing bodies the ability to present our constituents advisory questions through election ballots. The law is silent on this matter, and the Secretary of State relies on an outdated Attorney General Opinion. By explicitly requiring the Election Commissioner to include an additional section of the election ballot for non-binding questions upon a city's request, these local matters can be presented to the public during the regular election -- when voters are most engaged. The City of Bel Aire

supports ensuring advisory questions are clearly distinct from binding questions. We want voters to understand the essential differences, but it is a failure to all-together disallow advisory questions from being a part of our county run elections. Please support local engagement by passing legislation to allow the addition of advisory questions to elections overseen by the Secretary of State's county election offices.

Finally, please view every priority listed here through the lens of home rule: we will support legislation that strengthens home rule and oppose legislation that erodes our constitutional home rule authority.

Our governing body is more than willing to meet with you to discuss how these outlooks can make our community and our State better. We would welcome an email or call if you need additional information from us on specific issues. My email is JBenage@belaireks.gov and I can be reached at (316) 684-0226.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to understand and champion these priorities on behalf of the City of Bel Aire. Our citizens truly appreciate your time and commitment as our Representative. You continue to be a strong supporter and friend of Bel Aire which is a great honor. Thank you for all you do in Topeka.

Respectfully,

Mayor Jim Benage