

March 5, 2015

To: The Honorable Brian Clem, Chairman, and members
House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use and Water

Re: HB 2938, Testimony

Dear Chairman Clem & Committee Members:

Thank you, Representative Clem for sponsoring this bill.

I hope that you and the members of the Committee will recommend this bill and move it forward for consideration by the House.

I live in an urban unincorporated zone, beyond the boundaries of the nearest city. We consider ourselves a neighborhood and pay taxes for all the services we receive (and we also subsidize the taxes of other zones, according to a well-researched study performed by our elected auditor a few years ago). For over a decade various tactics have been employed by the city to secretly or forcibly annex our neighborhood. This has, so far, been avoided.

My neighbors' houses tend to be on acreage with septic tanks. When life situations change, necessitating a house-sale, they apply to our County sewage district for septic inspection. When there's a problem, they are denied repair permits because there is, by now, a sewer line within 300', maintained by the same County district but located within city boundaries. That's the requirement of the law and folks must hook up to this sewer or they cannot sell their house. No-one has a problem with that.

What happens is this: they go the City to hook into the sewer line but are given a form requiring them to annex to the City before sewer access is granted. Services are the same as before (plus sewer) but property taxes are much higher once annexed to the City. The applicant does not consult a lawyer, they simply do what they are being told is required. I believe this is wrongful action by the City at a time when applicants are at their most vulnerable, e.g. someone died, divorce etc.

Please pass this bill and close the loophole which the City has discovered allows them to forcibly annex these homeowners.

Please also consider amending the language of the bill so that cities cannot simply add a clause to their comprehensive plans to require full annexation to the city when the only thing required is an extension of sewer service (for which the homeowner pays)

Thank you

Kathy Sayles