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FRANK WHITE, JR.
Jackson County Executive

May 30, 2023

Dear Chairman and Legislators,

I hope this message finds you well. Your tireless work in bringing Ordinance 5747 to the table has certainly sparked important dialogue. The proposed use tax is a clear indication of our shared determination to secure Jackson County's financial future.

I'm supportive of the use tax and the positive implications it carries for our infrastructure and facility needs. It's not just about generating revenue, but also about ensuring a fair playing field for our local businesses, by taxing out-of-state purchases at a similar rate as in-state ones.

Nonetheless, I believe we can refine this measure to better serve our county's evolving needs. As a reflection of this belief, I let the ballot submission deadline pass without signing, intending this not as a rejection but as an invitation for further improvement.

The current language of the ordinance, while well-intentioned, may be too specific for our long-term flexibility. Two recent developments underscore the importance of this flexibility.

First, the potential need to replace our Jackson County's Family Justice Center has come to light. This need emerged as part of a facility planning process, a process funded by the legislature in this year's budget. The insights gained from this process suggest that a more efficient, secure space may be needed, something not explicitly provided for in the current ordinance language.

In addition, the potential relocation of our Medical Examiner Building for a state-funded psychiatric facility calls for our attention. Both these instances underscore the importance of adaptability in our approach.

I remain a proponent of the use tax, and I see value in bringing this issue to a November 2023 ballot, provided we can address these language limitations. In a positive turn of events, we've learned that Kansas City plans to include an item on the November ballot, which could reduce our expected election costs.

I appreciate the ongoing dialogue, Chairman and Legislators. Together, I'm confident we can craft an effective use tax proposal that strikes a balance between specificity and flexibility, thus enabling us to adapt to future needs.

As we advance in this process, I look forward to continuing our cooperative efforts for the benefit of Jackson County.

Best,

Frank White, Jr.
Jackson County Executive