



Champions For Effective Local Government



OKLAHOMA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE, INC.
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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Opposition Mounting On SQ 777 Regarding Constitutional Amendment For Farming

Written by the Honorable Randy Ross, Mayor, City of Choctaw

SQ 777 is a proposed constitutional amendment that would prohibit future legislatures or state regulatory agencies from passing any laws or adopting rules and regulations that negatively impact the rights of farmers and ranchers “to employ agricultural technology and livestock production and ranching practices.” It is vaguely written and could turn a 5 acre lot within a political subdivision (city or town) into agriculture land with the municipality not having any remedies to control the activities. Why tie the hands of local elected officials or even state officials to be able to regulate health and safety issues as it relates to their respective communities or the state as a whole?

How can you establish a “privileged” class to one group of people saying there can be no laws restricting them--this is a terrible idea and flies in the face of democracy.

Farming and ranching are extremely important to our state’s economy just as oil and gas has historically been. However, NO other industry in Oklahoma enjoys a ‘privileged’ class that is sheltered by ‘Constitutional’ protections. Can you imagine the precedent this might cause for other industries including oil, manufacturing, trucking? This issue goes against the fundamental principle of equal rights of all citizens!

Many of us are aware of the earthquake issues in Oklahoma. After legislation last year, the only authority that can address this is the Corporation Commission. If SQ 777 passes and there are water pollution issues dealing with agriculture, no city, state agency or the state could do anything about it. Imagine a pig sty within 100 feet of your bedroom and you would have no help from your city, county or state governments. These are some of the potential consequences of SQ 777. It needs to be rejected.

Municipal officials have a duty to their citizens to ensure they live in an environment where residents feel health and safety are being protected. One key service citizens and business expect and is being provided by cities is clean potable drinking water and the assurance there is an ample supply to go around. This

Constitutional amendment is a threat to public water supply systems both from a quality and quantity perspective.

Oklahoma is not California and Oklahomans should be opposed to passing constitutional amendments for one specific industry? If passed, this opens the door to blanket protection for almost anything to do with farming, ranching and agriculture.

Do not buy into the scare tactics being presented by the proponents of this legislation. If passed, it would be nearly impossible to ever overturn and repeal once the consequences of this constitutional amendment begin to surface.

A "No" vote in November is needed on SQ 777.

About Oklahoma Municipal League

The mission of the OML is to provide services and programs required by municipal officials to assist them in better serving their citizens, and to act as the representative of Oklahoma municipalities in interactions requiring a united voice. Since 1913, the League has served as the individual and collective voice of local officials on the state and national level.