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Dear Mayor and City Council,

As Blair and Washington County continue to enjoy strong economic growth and new investment, one of the greatest challenges we face is the shortage of workforce housing.

Over the past several years, Blair has attracted significant capital investment, job growth, and business expansion. Major employers are expanding, and new companies are actively considering our community for future development. While this momentum is highly encouraging, it has also driven up demand for housing, especially market-rate apartments and attainable workforce options.

At present, Blair has a limited supply of quality rental housing. Very few new apartment communities have been built in the past two decades, with only a handful delivered recently. As a result, many workers are commuting from outside the area, which creates difficulties in attracting and retaining talent and reduces overall quality of life. For local employers, this directly affects their ability to build and maintain a stable workforce.

To stay competitive and sustain our economic progress, Blair must actively promote new housing development, particularly multi-family and apartment projects.

We believe the thoughtful use of local incentive tools, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and the LB840 Economic Development Program, is both appropriate and essential at this time.

TIF can help address the high upfront costs of infrastructure, site preparation, and construction in today's challenging market, making projects financially viable when margins are thin. Likewise, LB840 offers a flexible mechanism to support housing initiatives that strengthen our workforce and community.

Without these tools, many much-needed housing projects, especially apartment developments, may not pencil out in the current economic climate. By strategically leveraging TIF and LB840, Blair can:

- Attract private investment into new housing
- Speed up the delivery of critically needed apartment units
- Help local employers by improving workforce availability and retention
- Build a stronger long-term tax base and enhance the community's economic vitality

Blair stands at a pivotal crossroads. We now have the opportunity to match our economic development success with strategic housing growth, ensuring our community remains a desirable place to live, work, and invest for years to come.

We value your continued partnership and support as we collaborate to meet this important need. Here at KRW Construction, 70% of our employees commute to Blair due to housing.

Steve Wehri
General Manager
KRW Construction, Inc.