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"The right of trial by jury shall remain inviolate. . . ."

Tennessee Constitution, Article I, Sec. 6

July 13, 2005

Mayor Mike Ragsdale
City County Building, Suite 615
400 Main Street
Knoxville, TN 37902

Dear Mayor Ragsdale:

RE: Adopting a Knox County policy to guard against Eminent Domain abuse

The leadership and members of Citizens for Home Rule, Inc. are alarmed at the unprecedented erosion of private property rights by the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision in *Kelo v. New London*. This ruling equates "public benefit" – a term unknown to the U.S. Constitution or the Constitution of the State of Tennessee – with "public use." Thus the Court has opened the door for nefarious takings of private property by all levels of government. Our disagreement with this ruling and the philosophy behind it could not be more profound.

Our organization strongly believes that Knox County property owners deserve protection against unwarranted exercise of the power of eminent domain.

We call on you to adopt and publically announce a policy applicable to Knox County and all of its operations, initiatives and agencies including the Knox County Development Corporation, that will restrict any exercise of eminent domain to those instances where it is both necessary and for an actual public use. Further, we ask that your policy entirely forsake the exercise of eminent domain for purpose of economic development, or to transfer or to lease property to others.

Please be advised that CHR is ready to assist and support any effort which may expedite your early attention to this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'John A. Emison'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'J'.

John A. Emison
President, CHR