



**FRANK WHITE, JR.**  
Jackson County Executive

September 20, 2019

Abe Cole  
Managing Partner  
BKD, LLP  
1201 Walnut Street, Suite 1700  
Kansas City, MO 64106-2246

VIA EMAIL [acole@bkd.com](mailto:acole@bkd.com)

Mr. Cole,

On September 18, 2019, the Prosecuting Attorney of Jackson County released a report regarding the County's public-safety sales tax, commonly known as COMBAT. The report released by the Prosecuting Attorney was prepared by BKD, LLP. My office was first made aware of the release of the report from local media outlets reporting on the report's contents.

Immediately upon reading the report, County staff identified numerous inaccuracies, omissions, and misleading statements within the report. Despite not being contacted during the audit process, staff from my office immediately reached out to BKD to offer their assistance in correcting the errors in the report.

This morning, members of my staff met with BKD staff members Julia Mast, Director and Shauna Woody-Coussens, Managing Director. At that meeting, my staff shared our collective frustration that we had not been consulted or involved in the process that led to BKD's severely misleading and inaccurate report. County staff provided numerous examples of inaccuracies, omissions, and misleading statements, but were careful to state on numerous occasions that they were confident that more errors existed.

During this morning's meeting between county staff and BKD representatives, my staff were alarmed to hear that despite the report's very first page stating that the report was not to be released, nor referenced without BKD's review and approval, that the Prosecuting Attorney had done so without either BKD's knowledge or approval. Furthermore, my staff learned today that numerous draft versions of this report had been prepared and provided by BKD to the Prosecuting Attorney and her staff starting in May of this year. BKD stated that they had assumed that those drafts were being shared with the relevant county staff to ensure that the report's contents were accurate, but had failed to ensure that was actually taking place.



While requesting time to evaluate many of the concerns raised by county staff, BKD representatives did acknowledge that the report's contents had not been updated to include accurate revenue figures, despite the fact that BKD had ready access to those figures long before the issuance of this report as BKD had performed the annual County financial audit. This failure alone led to multiple inaccurate statements, conclusions and recommendations throughout the report. In addition, BKD representatives commendably admitted their error, and directly apologized to our County Treasurer, for the misleading inclusion of his name in the report. While my staff has worked diligently since the report was released to identify and communicate the existence of dozens of obvious errors within the report, we are confident that more exist.

I am confident that you will agree with me that the use of tax dollars, especially for our community's safety, and the reputation of BKD are far too important to allow a report with this many obvious errors and omissions to remain uncorrected. I am asking that BKD immediately issue a public statement retracting the report, acknowledging that the report includes numerous errors and asking that the community and policy makers not rely upon its contents. When such a statement is released by BKD, I will publicly commend you for taking such a tough action and commit to working collectively with BKD as we move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frank White, Jr.", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Frank White, Jr.  
Jackson County Executive

cc:

Bryan Covinsky, Jackson County Counselor  
Ms. Shauna Woody-Coussens, Managing Director  
Ms. Julia Mast, Director  
Todd M. Schuler, Audit Manager, State of Missouri