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HB 2246

House Committee on Agriculture

Opposition Testimony to HB2246

Chairman Hoffman, members of the committee, the Kansas Farmers Union is offering testimony today in opposition. Our policy supports the current system of noxious weed control and through the county weed offices and as a whole has considered the current statutes to have been working pretty well. Here are some of our concerns.

- The bill is giving tremendous power to one individual, the Secretary of Agriculture. The Secretary appoints the advisory committee and also has the right to remove anyone who does not agree with the Secretary's actions. What would happen if a new Governor appoints a Secretary of Agriculture who happens to have a hatred of sunflowers and decides to declare it a noxious weed? Neighboring states have attempted that. Does our state "flower" become a noxious weed? Where in this structure is the ability to stop that effort?
- The advisory committee structure is concerning. Why are there positions on the board representing a "for profit" lobbying Association whose mission is to create business opportunities and profits for their members and owners? The Agribusiness and Co-op council membership on this committee are a clear conflict of interest. Wouldn't the committee structure be more responsible to the full voting public if those two slots were filled by a stewardship organization such as the Kansas Land Trust, the Nature Conservancy, etc?
- The extremely delicate balance between landowner rights and controlling the spread of a noxious weed has always been a very serious responsibility, and we feel responsibly handled by local county oversight. One worries that this bill gives a stronger presence and mission to abuse that delicate balance in an effort to stamp out the target. This is very serious and if this bill moves forward maybe it should be used to proactively install some landowner rights in regard to land access and the proposed method of treatments, drift responsibility, etc?
- Why does any weed declared noxious automatically apply state-wide? Seems over reaching, and in some circumstances, inappropriate.

Thank for the opportunity to offer our testimony today.

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