

To: House Agriculture Committee, Senator Kyle Hoffman, Chairman

From: John Donley, Kansas Farm Bureau

Date: March 7, 2018

Re: SB 331- Designating Flint Hills trail state park and Little Jerusalem state park as part of the state park system

Chairman Hoffman and members of the Committee, on behalf of Kansas Farm Bureau I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to SB 331. KFB is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 30,000 farm and ranch families through our 105 county Farm Bureau associations.

KFB policy states "we oppose the use of federal or state funds or state fee funds to acquire, own, operate or enlarge any federal or state preserve, park or monument on privately owned land." Additionally, KFB policy opposes "the use of federal or state tax revenues for development, enhancement or maintenance of rail banked rights-of-way or trail amenities."

There is growing pressure from state interests and other organizations, which in some instances do not pay property taxes, to purchase and control access to more and more land throughout the state of Kansas. Kansas Farm Bureau has consistently opposed such efforts in order to protect the private property rights of Kansas property owners. Privately owned property that is open for public enjoyment should be managed in a way that it does not infringe upon the property rights and livelihood of adjoining landowners nor should it increase the tax burden on neighboring landowners. The expense of operating a privately owned recreational facility should be borne by the landowner, not subsidized by taxpayers. Additionally, history has shown that in many instances land that is open to the public has negative impacts to adjoining land owners due to the lack of enforcement of existing laws. This would include the management of noxious weeds, maintenance of fences, enforcement of trespassing visitors, littering, etc. This has especially been a problem with trail groups historically.

While Kansas Farm Bureau appreciates the desire to expand outdoor opportunities for Kansas citizens, bills such as SB 331 tend to have negative impacts on land adjoining these properties. Thank you for your consideration of these comments and we ask that the committee reject and not pass out SB 331.