

**To: Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee**

**Senator Dan Kerschen, Chairperson**

**From: Ryan Flickner, Kansas Farm Bureau**

**Date: January 16, 2018**

**Re: SB 263- Written only Testimony Supporting SB 263**

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Good morning Chairman Kerschen and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to present written testimony on behalf of the Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) in support of SB 263. 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.

The American Farm Bureau Federation has adopted a policy supporting the research and marketing of hemp and hemp products. KFB supports this national policy.

As background, the 2014 Farm Bill included a provision allowing states through research institutions and departments of agriculture to grow and possess industrial hemp. It appears that 34 states have adopted legislation allowing research and development of industrial hemp products. (*See National Council of State Legislatures at <http://www.ncsl.org/research/agriculture-and-rural-development/state-industrial-hemp-statutes.aspx>*) SB 263 would allow Kansas to join those efforts.

KFB has been involved with many initiatives to grow the Kansas agricultural sector and the overall economy. We have also been actively engaged in the Governor's Water Vision which seeks to educate all Kansans on the value of water and encourage best management practices for use of water. It is our understanding that industrial hemp may be a crop that provides producers with a reasonable economic income and uses less water and inputs than some of the current commercial crops grown in Kansas. We need statistically proven research to validate the benefits and costs of industrial hemp production in Kansas. We also need good data on marketing and value added uses of industrial hemp. With this type of data, producers may be willing to explore and incorporate industrial hemp in their operations. SB 263 would authorize the Kansas Department of Agriculture and Kansas regents universities to conduct the needed research.

We are aware that there is likely to be a fiscal note associated with SB 263, and what this means given the difficult budget issues currently facing the state. We are hopeful that Kansas could draw upon the research and implementation practices of other states to reduce the fiscal note and relieve the expected concerns of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

We are hopeful, that the legislature will view this bill as an opportunity to research yet another agricultural product, which can create value added products that may help grow our economy and make use of a renewable fiber resource. To that end, we believe the bill as introduced stands alone on its merits and should not be used to further conversations or debate relating to promotion, growth, or legalities of products or byproducts that have higher amounts of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) than industrial hemp at 0.3 percent or less. Additionally, like the bill, KFB policy does not support legislation which violates federal law. For these reasons, we ask your support for SB 263.