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Written Testimony on House Bill 2669
Presented to House Committee on Agriculture
By Thad Holcombe, Moderator of LETUS
Feb. 18, 2020

I am presenting testimony on behalf of LETUS (Lawrence Ecology Teams United in Sustainability). We are an interfaith network of the following faith communities in Lawrence, Kansas: First Presbyterian Church, Lawrence Jewish Community Congregation, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lawrence, Plymouth Congregational church, Oread Friends Meeting, St. John the Evangelist Catholic Parish, Trinity Episcopal Church, Islamic Center of Lawrence.

We are in opposition to HB 2669. We recognize and affirm the importance of the web of life, including the human species. And that respect for this web includes providing a voice for flora and fauna that are endangered and/or threatened in Kansas. To delete the procedure for the state of Kansas providing citizens and scientist the opportunity to propose consideration of flora/fauna that are possible endangered is to curtail the possibility of them be protected as they should be. We recognize that there is "tension" between value of land and it being controlled by owners and value of habitat which that land provides. We affirm that habitat is an affirmation of life that needs to be respected in contrast to land being considered only as "resource" that is more important and deemed worth more in dollars. All is connected in the web of life and the human species is threatened as well as endangered when there is not adequate consideration given for listing as endangered. The state of Kansas is in a better position to understand the uniqueness of those species that need to be protected in the state than having a blanket listing being provide only by the federal government.

We urge the committee to not diminish the opportunity to protect unique Kansas flora/fauna and instead support the expertise of those in the state, including the Department of Wildlife to assist the federal government in listing of what is to be considered "endangered". We believe as faith communities that this is respecting all of life .