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House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee

Testimony Re: HB 2595

Presented by Ronald R. Hein

on behalf of

Kansas Beverage Association

February 17, 2016

Mister Chairman, Members of the Committee:

My name is Ron Hein, and I am legislative counsel for the Kansas Beverage Association (KBA) (formerly the Kansas Soft Drink Association), which is the state trade association for non-alcoholic beverage bottling companies operating in Kansas. Products manufactured and distributed by members of the KBA include soft drinks, bottled waters, isotonic drinks, juice, juice drinks, sports drinks, dairy-based beverages, teas, and other beverages.

The KBA supports HB 2595.

HB 2595 reserves to the Legislature the authority to make decisions about nutrition labeling and additional regulation of food. The bill ensures that if there are any new regulations they will be statewide and not a patchwork of local food regulations.

From the farm to the grocery, convenience store, and restaurant, food is already highly regulated to ensure safety by divisions of the USDA, the FDA, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

Foundations and the federal government offer money to aid in local government control of food choices. Even the US Centers for Disease Control, says "an important role of local government is to serve as a testing ground for new and promising public health initiatives. As local governments develop and implement policies to address the marketing of unhealthful foods in their communities, it is critical that they form partnerships to conduct research and generate knowledge about the effectiveness of their policies and to transfer that knowledge to other municipalities." Preventing Chronic Disease: Public Health Research, Practice and Policy, Sept. 2011.

The 2009 stimulus bill included \$650 million for local governments to experiment with ways to influence consumers' choices by such things as menu labeling, requiring calorie posting and discouraging the consumption of sweetened drinks.

Consumers can make their own choices about what they buy and what they eat. Individual responsibility is the single most effective way to address food-related public health issues rather than regulations.

Thank you for permitting me to submit this written testimony.