

Written Testimony opposing HB 2595
House Committee on Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development
February 17, 2016

Chairman Hutton and members of the Committee:

I am writing to oppose HB 2595. It seems almost certain to assert State control where it is not needed and to harm the economy and the health of Kansas.

It would hinder, if not stop altogether, the fledgling efforts of Kansas communities to create more economic development around local food—growing it, selling it locally, and working together to make markets where local people can buy, at economical prices, fresh produce and other locally-produced food.

HB 2595 cuts counter to the recommendations of the Kansas Local Food and Farm Task Force (report recently presented to House and Senate Committees on Agriculture). The Task Force is charged by statute with creating recommendations for "expanding and supporting local food systems and for assessing and overcoming obstacles necessary to increase locally grown food production."

The Task Force has made recommendations in line with its mandate, to boost both the economy of Kansas and the health of its citizens. These policy efforts would be stymied by HB 2595, which takes away local authority in many areas that have traditionally been matters for local decision-making.

Healthy food, including whole grains, fresh produce, and dairy products, are (or can be) produced in Kansas, and if they are made available locally, they will be affordable. HB2595 would take away much of the ability of local community leaders to create what their areas need to help make this happen.

Please don't destroy local initiative and cramp economic development. This bill deserves to die in committee.

Sincerely,
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