



February 9, 2016

Lea Ann E. Seiler, CPM

Hodgeman County Economic Development Director

HB 2595, Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee

Chairman Hutton and members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opposition to House Bill 2595.

I live and work in Hodgeman County, Kansas and serve as the Economic Development Director. I am part of GROW, which is our local Farm and Food Policy Council. The mission of GROW is to “enhance the quality of life for all Hodgeman County residents by increasing access to economic opportunity, nutritious local food and physical activity.” Our vision is to have a healthy, thriving community that:

- Provides healthy access to healthy local foods for all residents;
- Supports growth, businesses and the local economy;
- Encourages local food production and agriculture;
- Encourages physical activity through enhancement of places for physical activity and outdoor recreation;
- Promotes educational resources for the local population.

GROW was developed in response to the community's need AND desire to address the things listed above. Kansas residents WANT to enhance their LOCAL food system, and want the local control to do it.

A resolution authorizing GROW was signed by our Board of County Commissioners in May 2015 and we have been excited about the opportunities it has afforded the county and the successes we are starting to see.

I believe that HB 2595 will halt the momentum of GROW; as well as that of our Lions Club Community Garden; County-wide Farmers Market; and initiatives that support increased access to healthy foods in our community (such as adding frozen yogurt sticks to the snack menu at the swimming pool in the summertime-- instead of only candy bars).

I am surprised (and confused) as to why a bill that would increase State control over local cities and counties...preempting local authority and effectively tying their hands on something as important as healthy food and economic development...would be conceivable at a time when the State has no capacity or plan in place to fill the void.

I respectfully request that the committee oppose HB 2595.

Lea Ann E. Seiler