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Date: February 16, 2023  
To: Representative Fred Patton, Chairman, House Committee on Judiciary  
From: Shahira Stafford, Kansas Cooperative Council  
**RE: Proponent, Written-only Testimony on House Bill 2326**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Kansas Cooperative Council (Co-op Council), thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 2326. The Co-op Council is a statewide association that works on behalf of all types of cooperatively structured businesses in Kansas. Some of the industries organized as cooperatives include agriculture, utility, financial, and insurance. Simply, cooperatives differ from other businesses because they are member-owned, member-controlled, and profits are returned to its member-patrons.

The cooperative industry is concerned about metal thefts across Kansas and the damage done to property in commission of such thefts or attempted thefts.

Our agricultural cooperatives are particularly vulnerable to scrap metal theft. As thieves strip the copper wiring and piping from grain bins and irrigation equipment, they leave thousands of dollars' worth of damage in the process; not to mention putting essential crop machinery out of operation for weeks.

The Co-op Council supports strong enforcement of our state's scrap metal laws aimed at preventing such crimes and enhancing penalties for those convicted of these offenses. We supported the Legislature's enactment of the scrap metal theft reduction act in 2015 to strengthen penalties and track transactions by scrap dealers and recycling centers.

We respectfully ask the Committee to support House Bill 2326, which extends the sunset of this important program that is set to expire this year. Thank you for allowing the Kansas Cooperative Council to comment today.