

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 2608  
to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources  
By Josh McGinn  
Kansas Department of Agriculture  
March 20, 2024**

Good morning, Chairman Peck and members of the committee. My name is Josh McGinn and I serve as the Assistant Secretary for the Kansas Department of Agriculture. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2608.

The Kansas poultry industry is a highly valuable industry despite being smaller in comparison to other sectors of Kansas agriculture. Kansas is the home to some innovative and high-value egg laying and poultry genetics companies in addition to the commercial egg layers and gamebird producers and turkey growers. Poultry and egg production generates \$82.9 million annually and poultry processing has \$35.6 million in annual output according to IMPLAN, an economic tracking software.

Early poultry production was limited primarily by pullorum. Pullorum is a disease that causes white diarrhea, dehydration, and high mortality in young poultry. Mortality is often extremely high; however, some birds do recover. These birds become lifelong carriers and can transmit the disease to their offspring via eggs. Pullorum was discovered in 1899 and an antigenic blood test was developed in 1913, allowing for quick and reliable blood testing to detect the bacterium *Salmonella pullorum*.

Established in 1935, the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) has allowed for the expansion of poultry marketing in the country with the goal of eliminating poultry diseases. The NPIP is a voluntary state–federal cooperative testing and certification program for poultry breeding flocks, hatcheries, and dealers. The objective of the NPIP is to provide a cooperative state–federal program through which new technology can be applied effectively to the improvement of poultry and poultry products by establishing standards for the testing of poultry breeding stock, baby chicks, poults, and hatching eggs to protect against certain diseases, especially pullorum typhoid.

The vast majority of U.S. states prohibit the entry of any poultry shipments except those designated pullorum-typhoid clean. In order to certify that their shipments are pullorum-typhoid free, businesses participate in the NPIP to ensure their products have tested negative for pullorum-typhoid before leaving their home state. Most U.S. trading partners importing poultry and products from the United States also require NPIP participation. Accredited veterinarians may be requested to inspect breeder flocks participating in the NPIP for compliance with the standards and to issue health certifications. Through rigorous testing and surveillance, by the 1970s pullorum had been largely eradicated from commercial poultry flocks thus allowing for

the development of poultry industry today. However, the disease has persisted in small flocks, preventing the full eradication of the disease.

Since 1945, Kansas has participated in the NPIP. The Division of Animal Health within KDA serves as the official state agency for the administration and oversight of NPIP programs in Kansas. This includes interstate commerce, import/export, disease surveillance, testing, permitting, and disease response plan activities. These activities have been carried out by the Division of Animal Health veterinarians at no cost to the businesses and individuals requesting the service.

HB 2608 would enable KDA to assess a participant fee for any entity or person who wants to voluntarily participate in the NPIP program. This participation fee would not exceed \$50 annually. Additionally, anyone requesting testing or diagnostic services pertaining to NPIP would be assessed a visitation fee that would not exceed \$100 per location.

KDA also works with outside certified individuals who may elect to become a certified tester for pullorum-typhoid. Once certified, an individual would be capable of performing poultry disease diagnostic services pursuant to the poultry disease control act. HB 2608 would allow the agency to assess a fee for certifying anyone wanting to become a certified tester.

### **Overview of House Amendments**

In the House Committee, an amendment was added to make it clear that this program is specific to testing for pullorum-typhoid. There was some concern in the poultry breeding industry that other testing could be included that is required by some states for importation of poultry, but that was not the intent of the agency in proposing this legislation.

On the House floor, an amendment was added to strike language allowing the agency to develop rules and regulations to carry out this statute. The agency does not want to expand the scope of this bill beyond testing for pullorum-typhoid, but we would ask for clarifying language so that the agency could pass a regulation to provide for a participation fee of less than \$50, and we have language from a different program available that we believe would limit our rule-making authority to adopting a lower fee than what is currently provided in the bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2608. I'm happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.