



KANSAS RURAL CENTER

FOR THE HEALTH OF THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

KANSAS RURAL CENTER

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Opponent: SB 248

Dear Chairwoman Tyson and Members of the Committee on Assessment and Taxation:

The Kansas Rural Center is writing in opposition to Senate Bill 248. This bill would reimpose tax on some food items which are not deemed healthy. The Kansas Rural Center has long stood in support of increasing the accessibility of locally produced, healthy food, but we do not feel that this bill would improve access.

The somewhat limited list of healthy foods would create an administrative burden for the state to maintain and update with new food products and it would provide challenge for small scale food producers and direct marketing farmers who sell at farmers markets and smaller rural grocery stores. Market farmers often bring a mix of fresh fruits and vegetables, sometimes meat or eggs, as well as some value added products such as jams, jellies and breads to sell at a farmers market. For vendors with such variety the list of healthy foods would raise questions on how to tax their different products. Some would obviously be exempt, the fruits and vegetables and meat and eggs, but what kind of wheat flour was used in the bread? How much sugar is in a jam/jelly or a fruit spread and does that qualify as canned fruit or an unhealthy product? If some of their products fall into the taxable "unhealthy" realm the farmer would then need to track multiple taxing rates for different farm products which would create management headaches. Most local market vendors do not use a point of sale system, simply ringing up the prices of individual items and then adding tax on for the purchase. Having multiple taxing rates creates extreme challenges for these businesses. I can imagine that this challenge might discourage the production of value added products which can be critical to the bottom line of small farm businesses.

The complications imposed on smaller food businesses, especially rural grocery stores and direct marketing farmers would be an undue burden. We urge you not to pass SB 248 and not to impose this additional burden on Kansas small businesses.

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