

March 14, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

Time is a funny thing. Remember when you were seven years old and your next birthday seemed like it would never come? Today, birthday's roll around way to fast and time simply won't stand still.

Fifty years.... It isn't a lifetime. It doesn't cover even the lifespan of one generation. The redwoods are hundreds of years old. The prairies of Kansas are equally historic. I often wish the hills could talk. They would tell me about the Indians that camped by the nearby creek 150 years ago. They would tell me about my ancestors who built homes and planted the now notorious Osage orange. They would talk about fences, buffalo and cattle. They would sweetly speak of fire and sadly talk of cedar trees. They might wonder why new homes are segregating their vastness and the city continues to creep ever closer.

Voluntary conservation easements allow landowners to make serious choices regarding their land. These decisions take a great deal of time, planning and money. The goal of conservation easements is to allow future generations to continue the ranching legacy that is part of the historic, economic and social make-up of Kansas.

Other states are losing the battle. Much of the hill country of Texas is gone. The beautiful ranching country near Steamboat, Colorado is lost forever. In the blink of 50 years, these states lost much of their culture and identity.

As Kansans we have the power to hold our identity, preserve working landscapes, protect fragile ecosystems and provide future generations with a precious heirloom - the Kansas prairie.

Conservation easements are designed to preserve for the long-term. Protecting nature and a culture takes time. Fifty years is a drop in the bucket. I encourage you to take action against HB 2587.

Sincere regards,

Heather Huntington Fuesz
Greenwood County Rancher
RTK Vice President