

PUBLIC POLICY STATEMENT

SENATE COMMITTEE on TRANSPORTATION

RE: Support for HB 2202 – an act concerning transportation;
relating to regulations for hauling hay during drought

March 13, 2013
Topeka, Kansas

Testimony provided by:
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Assistant Director
KFB Governmental Relations

Chairman Petersen and members of the Senate Committee on Transportation, thank you for the opportunity to offer support of HB 2202. I am Brad Harrelson, Assistant Director—Governmental Relations for Kansas Farm Bureau. KFB is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 40,000 farm and ranch families through our 105 county Farm Bureau Associations.

As you are aware, production agriculture is very dependent on, and vulnerable to the whim of Mother Nature. This is particularly true for rainfall in the arid plains states, including Kansas. Our state is enduring one of worst prolonged droughts in recorded history. At some point in the last two years all 105 counties in Kansas have been declared to be experiencing severe to exceptional drought. It is estimated crop losses in Kansas exceeded \$1.5 billion in 2012 alone. Drought conditions are predicted to continue in 2013.

Extreme precipitation shortages not only negatively affect grain crop yields, but also hay and forage crops intended for livestock feed. It is common during times of severe drought that forage feedstocks become scarce and must be imported from other states and regions. Unfortunately, as pastures burn up and hay supplies dwindle, the need for hay often becomes immediate to nourish livestock across the state.

As such, we support the provisions of HB 2202 which would automatically relax certain weight and size restrictions for the transportation of hay and forage feedstuffs during times of drought as declared by the Governor. This is a common sense approach during times of critical need, maintains highway safety, and eliminates unnecessary delays in delivering life sustaining feed.

Kansas Farm Bureau respectfully urges your recommendation to pass favorably HB 2202. Thank you, once again, for the opportunity to share the policy of our members. KFB stands ready to assist you as you consider this important measure.