



Kansas Cooperative Council
Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association

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Jan. 26, 2016

TO: House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources

From: Leslie Kaufman, Kansas Cooperative Council (KCC)
Randy Stookey, Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Assoc. (KARA)

RE: HB 2479 - Support for moving noxious weed designation to regulatory process

Chairman Schwartz and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources, thank you for the opportunity to comment today in support of HB 2479, as it pertains to the designation of noxious weeds through the rule and regulation process.

I am Leslie Kaufman and I appear today on behalf of the co-op members of the Kansas Cooperative Council and also on behalf of our agribusiness partner, the Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association. The KCC's membership includes farm marketing and ag supply cooperatives, rural electric and telecommunications companies, insurance and risk management operations, credit unions and Farm Credit system members. KARA is a voluntary trade association whose membership includes over 700 agribusiness firms that are primarily retail facilities supplying fertilizers, crop protection chemicals, and seed to Kansas farmers. Together, our agribusiness members provide many of the crop protection products needed by producers and landowners to control noxious weeds. Thus, this bill is of interest to our associations and our members.

The current legislative process for designating noxious weeds can be time consuming and cumbersome. At times, it can become political, too. Thus, the existing structure might not allow for a quick response in addressing damaging weed issues, and that does concern us.

Our associations have typically expressed a general preference for legislating by statute over rule and regulation. So, it may seem odd to some that we are supporting a move away from a statutory designation structure to a regulatory framework under the Kansas Dept. of

Agriculture (KDA). Our organizations also support regulation that is science-based and has practical application in the real world. We see the proposed regulatory management approach contained in HB 2479 as a means of strengthening the science behind the noxious weed designation. As an added bonus, this is done through a mechanism that decreases the politics surrounding a listing and encourages industry participation through the advisory committee. Each of our associations is afforded the opportunity to recommend an advisory committee member. As such, the advantages inherent in the regulatory proposal contained in HB 2479, in our opinion, outweigh our general bent toward legislating through statute. Thus, we are supportive of the proposed legislation.

Last year, when testifying on the noxious weed bill, we requested an amendment modifying how the two agribusiness seats on the noxious weed advisory committee named to provide both KARA and the KCC the ability to recommend a committee member. We sincerely appreciate that the requested change was incorporated into this year's HB 2479 version of the legislation and we thank the Kansas Dept. of Agriculture for including both our associations in naming process.

Thank you for your consideration and we note again our appreciation for the opportunity to voice support for HB 2479. Please let us know if you have any questions: Leslie Kaufman, 785-220-4068 or Randy Stookey, 785-234-0461.

I will be glad to stand for questions at the appropriate time.