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## **HB 2479**

Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

**KFU position is neutral.**

Testimony on HB 2479, the noxious weed bill, by Donn Teske, Kansas Farmers Union

Chairman Schwartz, members of the committee, I am testifying today representing Kansas Farmers Union from a neutral position. Yes, I know, KFU neutral in anything is seldom the case...

Our policy supports the current system of noxious weed control and through the county weed offices and as a whole has considered the current statutes to have been working pretty well. If I would have made the Dept of Agriculture's pre-session meeting maybe I would have a better understanding of the reasons behind this huge effort to shift current practice and I apologize for missing it. I am always hesitant to mess up something that is working pretty well.

One is naturally suspicious of any legislative bill that requires 16 pages to explain, makes one feel they are reading a download app agreement on the internet and wondering just how much of one's life one is signing away each time....

But, besides being paranoid here are a few concerns that jumped out at me as we reviewed it.

- It is giving TREMENDOUS power to one individual, the Secretary of Ag. That person appoints the advisory committee and also has the right to remove anyone who does not agree with the Secretaries actions. What would happen if a new Governor appoints a Secretary of Agriculture who happens to have a hatred of sunflowers and decides to declare it a noxious weed? Neighboring states have attempted that. Does our state "flower" become a noxious weed? Where in this structure is the ability to stop that effort? And, heaven forbid, the Governor appoints an organic producer as Secretary? That has happened in the not that distant past. Just the thought of this ought to give the Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association acid reflux.....

(Over please)

- The advisory committee structure is concerning. Not to keep picking on the Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association but their permanent position on the advisory committee feels wrong. Why is there a position on the board representing a “for profit” lobbying Association whose mission is to create business opportunities and profits for their members? It kind of feels like appointing an undertaker to the hospital board, yes, one is sure their intentions are the purest and best for the patient, but in the back of one’s mind one worries a little tiny bit.... ?? And is this the perception this committee wants to send out to the voting public? And, as much as I like Co-ops, my comments about the Agribusiness Retailers kind of goes for the Coop Council on the committee too. Wouldn’t the committee structure be more responsible to the full voting public if those two slots were filled by a stewardship organization such as the Kansas Land Trust, the Nature Conservancy, etc?
- The extremely delicate balance between landowner rights and controlling the spread of a noxious weed has always been a very serious responsibility, and I feel responsibly handled, by local county oversight. One worries that this bill gives a stronger presence and mission to abuse that delicate balance in an effort to stamp out the target. This is very serious and if this bill moves forward maybe it should be used to proactively install some landowner rights in regard to land access and the proposed method of treatments, drift responsibility, etc?
- Why does any weed declared noxious automatically apply state-wide? Seems over reaching, and in some circumstances, inappropriate.

As presented, and not addressing our concerns, Kansas Farmers Union will oppose this bill.

Thank you for your time,

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