

Young Bear

Chairman Sloan and members of the committee:

Hello Kansas State legislation and the committee, and thank you for time today on this very serious issue of water quality and conservation. I want to discuss with you the benefits of HB 2726 non-corn irrigation grant program and the low-water-use crop grant program. I have resided in the midwest my entire life, in both Iowa, Nebraska & now Kansas so this issue is VERY near and dear to my heart. Let me tell you who I am.

My name is Muriel Young Bear, Mekw 'iid from the Meskwaki Tribe in Tama, Iowa. I was RAISED in the middle of large industrial corn fields, and my tribe also grows our own Indian Corn. I want to tell you the problem with Industrial Corn, it is true the amount of water it requires to maintain such vast scale crops, and not to mention the toxic water run off from the modern agricultural practices. I believe there is a better way, and have been on a year long journey to find solutions that WORK for Industrial Agriculture, and Industrial Hemp is a GREAT solutions as well as an old crop the state of Kansas produced proficiently.

As a history buff, I looked into the Kansas Hemp history was able to find out how much our State was involved in Industrial Hemp. I came across some VERY interesting research from Kansas State which shows a Master Thesis written in 1970 on the Longevity of Industrial Hemp. This research was funded and review by the state and university committee, so it must have had value, even today! This crop was the ORIGINAL American crop which helped American win the revolution, and was the first crop to sustain a growing population. I wonder how we got so far from our roots, but I will continue to support Industrial Hemp as Kansas Industrial, rotation crop.

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Industrial Hemp is a low irrigation crop, which also strengthens and heals the soil. The Hemp taproot is able to penetrate the top soil so deeply, and aerate the roots, while also providing more nutrients and water deeper into the soil. For this crop, water quality and control would be its MAIN contribution, because of zero pesticides needed and minimal water to irrigate. Hemp can grow on its own, in almost any soil and any climate. Even if we don't use Industrial Hemp as main Industrial Crop, we still need it as a rotation crop to conserve water, phytoremediate the soil and pull carbon [carbon sequester] from the air.

I would like to become more involved in Kansas Agriculture, both Industrial and CSA style, because our food systems, along with water quality and conservation, are VERY near and dear to both Kansas and my heart. My tribe, have artifacts of Algonquin materials made of HEMP, so this was also something my tribe also used and thrive from. Our state food systems, as well as water, air and soil quality all need to be addressed. Not to mention our state economy, your vote can unlock a new industry, and Kansas could be a leader since we have a strong history with this Original American Crop.