



**SOUTHERN KANSAS COTTON GROWERS COOPERATIVE, INC.**  
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To: Representative Ken Rahjes, Chairman, House Agriculture Committee

**From: Rex Friesen, Ph.D., Southern Kansas Cotton Growers Cooperative, Inc.**

RE: Proponent Testimony on HB 2559

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Rex Friesen. I serve as crop consultant and public relations representative for SKCG, and assist Kansas Cotton Association needs. I worked as an Integrated Pest Management Extension Agent in cotton in SW Texas for five years before coming to Kansas in 2000. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony in support House Bill 2559 to establish the Kansas Cotton Boll Weevil Program. This bill gives us the tools we need to carry out the mission of maintaining a boll-weevil free state.

**Introduction**

In modern history, limited acres of cotton have been produced in Kansas from the early 1980s. However, due to several factors, cotton acreage has dramatically increased since 2016 to the point the National Cotton Council, the cotton industry's national governing body, would express concern over the lack of adequate monitoring for the presence of boll weevils, a severe cotton pest that is currently under eradication efforts throughout the Cotton Belt. The boll weevil has been eradicated in the US, excepting the Southern Texas region, as Boll weevils continue to immigrate from Mexico, posing a constant threat to US cotton production. Efforts to keep them from spreading throughout Texas and beyond have been overwhelmingly successful. However, due to the potential serious impact and the possibility of boll weevils flying or "hitchhiking" on custom equipment transported across state lines justifies significant efforts throughout the Cotton Belt to make sure they do not become established in any other region, should they arrive by whatever means.

What's the problem?

Kansas needs an independent, self-funded, organization to manage trapping and associated tasks to guarantee the rapid detection and response to any boll weevil infestation, should it arise.

How will bill fix the problem?

This bill will formally create the entity, "Kansas Cotton Boll Weevil Program", to be governed and directed by producer-stakeholders, authorize the collection of fees, trapping, monitoring and treatment, if needed. Establishing the KCBWP organization facilitates formalized, legal relationships, e.g., MOUs, with the FSA, KDA, and or other related departments, offices, and businesses, to assist in accomplishing our mission.

Thank you again, for the opportunity to speak to you about this issue and I ask your support of House Bill 2559. I am happy to answer any questions you might have. Feel free to contact me or Gary Feist, chairman of the Kansas Cotton Association (tel:620-842-3129), at any time.