

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 2559
to the House Committee on Agriculture
by Kenneth Titus, Chief Counsel
Kansas Department of Agriculture
February 3, 2022**

Good afternoon, Chairman Rahjes and members of the committee. I am Kenneth Titus and I serve as Chief Counsel for the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA). Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2559.

House Bill 2559 would establish a cotton boll weevil monitoring program in Kansas. Creation of this program was proposed by the growers and stakeholders in the Kansas cotton industry and KDA supports their efforts to protect cotton in Kansas. In 2012, 54,000 acres of cotton were harvested in the state. That number reached an all-time high in 2020 with 184,000 acres harvested. Nearby Texas and Oklahoma have had long-established cotton industries and have already developed similar detection programs. These state programs ensure the early detection and elimination of boll weevils, and as Kansas' cotton acres continue to mature, it is important to protect Kansas' investment as well.

Along with a seat on the board of directors of the proposed organization, the Secretary of Agriculture would serve as the responsible entity should the detection program no longer be needed. We believe the cotton producers have developed a responsible and transparent framework for the establishment of this program, and this program will serve to protect Kansas cotton. In addition to the development of a monitoring and detection program paid for by producers, in the event of an infestation, any solution can be properly managed through coordination and use of the Secretary of Agriculture's existing authority to protect the state from plant pests.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2559. KDA believes that passage of this bill will show support for the cotton industry in Kansas.