



House Fed / State Affairs
HB2706 - Proponent

Thank you members of the House Federal & State Affairs Committee for allowing this hearing. As president of the Kansas Hemp Consortium, I appreciate the opportunity to express support for HB 2706. I am a resident and business owner in Sedgwick County, Kansas and have been licensed to grow hemp by the Kansas Department of Agriculture since 2019. I support HB 2706 and urge you to vote in favor of this legislation.

The benefits of HB 2706 are many and among the most important is the clarification provided to the industry and law enforcement around products derived from industrial hemp. It matches the intent of the industrial hemp program in our state with straightforward regulation in accordance with federal law.

Growing industrial hemp is hard. As a producer, I can testify to the difficulties of identifying the right seed genetics for our region. Producers are at the mercy of limited knowledge regarding planting and harvesting techniques, undeveloped infrastructure and markets. There are many obstacles to success and the constant churning of regulations only adds to the struggle of farmers and small business owners.

Among the highest fees in the country for hemp producers, the number of planted and harvested acres of industrial hemp have been on the decline in our state since the program started in 2019. Last year in Kansas, there were only 260 acres of industrial hemp harvested, that's down from approximately 700 and 1500 acres in 2020 and 2019 respectively. The industry needs advocates at every level and Kansas legislators have the opportunity to set this industry on the path toward success to the benefit of all Kansans.

Hemp grains are great food for humans and, someday soon, livestock. The environmental and economic impacts of industrial hemp are proven to be very positive. A leading producer of industrial hemp before prohibition, the conditions are right. With regulations designed to encourage the development of this industry instead of stifling it, Kansas producers have the chance to add an important crop to their rotations.

Thanks for your time and attention to this important legislation. Please support HB 2706 and the industrial hemp industry in Kansas.

Kind regards,

Sarah Stephens
President
KS Hemp Consortium