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**Testimony on SB 134 to
The Senate Agriculture Committee
By Chad Bontrager, Deputy Secretary
Kansas Department of Agriculture
February 10, 2015**

Good morning, Chairman Love and members of the committee. I am Chad Bontrager, deputy secretary of the Kansas Department of Agriculture and I am testifying in support of SB134. KDA has responsibility for administering the Kansas Noxious Weed Law. I would like to cover the proposed changes made to that law by SB134 and answer any questions the committee may have in regard to the bill.

SB134 targets three areas in making improvements in the Kansas Noxious Weed Law. First and foremost, the bill creates the state noxious weed advisory committee and places the state noxious weed list in regulation.

- Weeds would be added or removed from the list upon recommendation of the advisory committee to the Secretary of Agriculture and promulgation of regulations by the Secretary.
- There are currently 12 weeds on the noxious weed list in statute. This list will expire on July 1, 2016 in order to give us time to work those weeds into regulation and not have a gap in coverage.
- The advisory committee will consist of 11 members appointed by the Secretary. The committee will represent landowners, weed scientists, county weed directors and herbicide businesses that will provide science-based recommendations on the control of noxious weeds.
- By establishing a committee of individuals that have an extensive and working knowledge of the management of weeds, their expertise will guide and advise the Secretary, providing an improved response to potentially noxious weeds in terms of eradication or control. This advisory committee will also provide for a thorough, scientific and objective evaluation of weeds under consideration.

Second, SB134 makes changes to the noxious weed law that streamline the administration of the law by KDA and county weed departments.

- The bills gives counties the ability to more effectively manage the money for the noxious weed program through their general fund, if they so choose, and allows for money to be carried over from year to year for noxious weed control activities.
- County commissioners, weed directors, and KDA are more fully incorporated into the requirements for weed management activities and reporting so that all parties can be more knowledgeable of the processes.
- This measure would also allow counties to either collect up to 50 percent of the cost of treatment from a landowner or negotiate a payment plan and return money to the noxious weed capital outlay fund in a timelier manner.

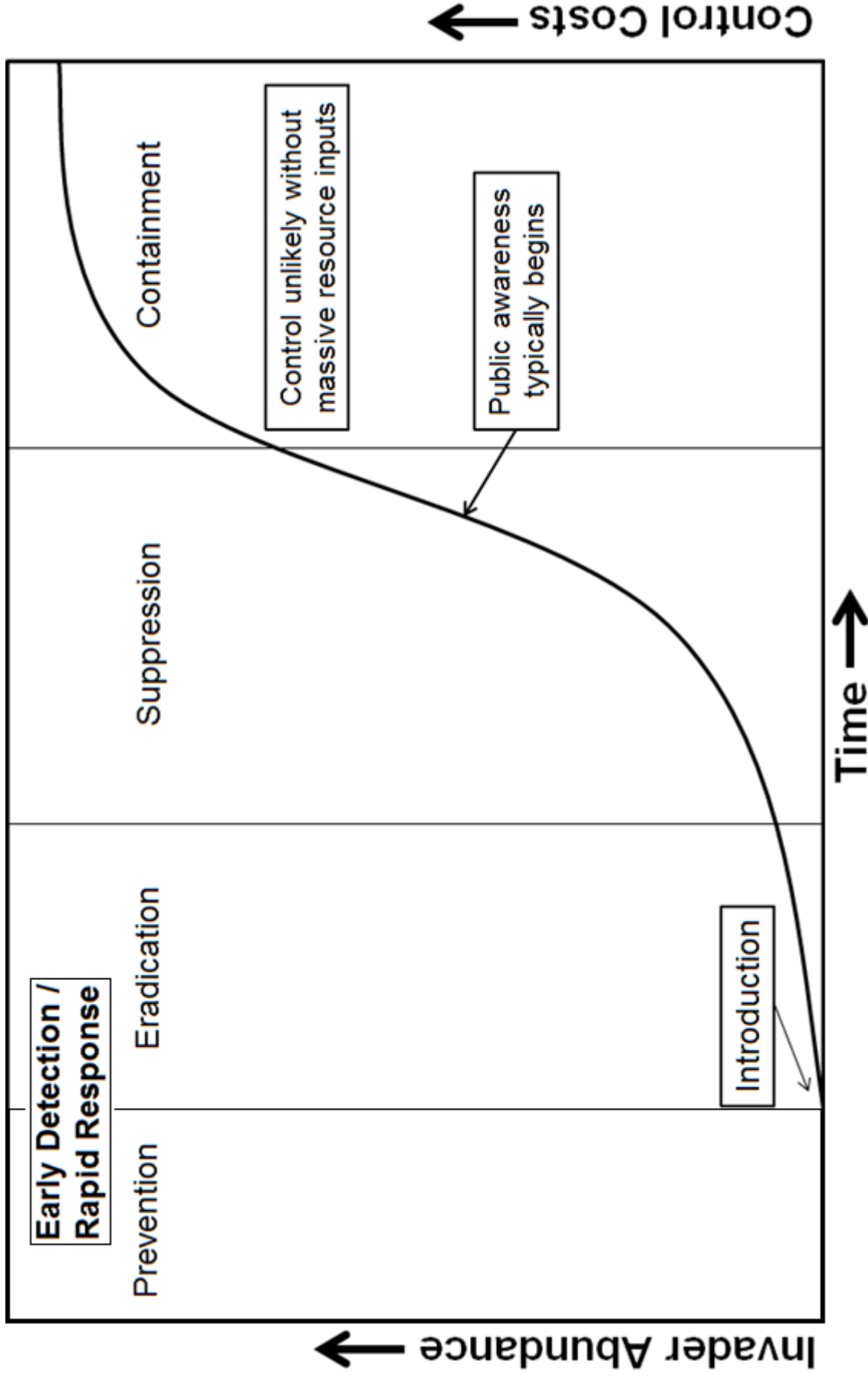
- Counties are given the ability to have county specific noxious weeds if they so choose. SB134 clarifies that counties are responsible for the control of all noxious weeds within the county border unless that responsibility has been taken on by a city or township.
- The bill clarifies the records retention process for counties and KDA. SB134 gives landowners added protection and improves compliance with the noxious weed law by increasing the penalty for violations to \$200 per day.

Third, SB134 updates and cleans up the noxious weed law in order to accommodate the changes outlined above as well as address outdated and unused provisions.

- The option for a declaration of sericea lespedeza disaster area is removed along with the requirement for conducting research on sericea lespedeza control.
- The outdated reference to the division of noxious weeds is removed.
- The requirement that KDA pay a quarter of the county weed directors' salary is removed.
- The section of the noxious weed law requiring weed supervisors to file a surety bond is removed.
- County commissioners will no longer be required to submit an annual report.
- Notification requirements are updated to allow for the use of websites and electronic mail.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB134 and the proposed changes to the noxious weed law. We believe these changes are important to improving the eradication and control of noxious weeds in Kansas. I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Invasive Species Invasion Curve



Prevention - Preventing the introduction of the species.
Eradication - Eliminating all of the infestations.
Suppression - Reducing or eliminating the number of infestations.
Containment - Reducing or eliminating the further spread of the infestations