

To: The Senate Natural Resources
Committee
Senator Larry Powell, Chair
From: Kansas Natural Resource Council
Re: Opposition to House Bill 2479



**Kansas Natural
Resource Council**

Chairman Powell and Honorable Members of the Committee,

The Kansas Natural Resource Council (KNRC) opposes HB 2479, a bill amending the Kansas Noxious Weed law, because it does not adequately protect our state's organic and specialty crop producers, or landowners who wish to establish native wildlife habitat on their property.

In allowing noxious weed declarations by the Secretary of Agriculture and a hand picked weed advisory board, HB 2479 has the potential to fast track noxious weed declarations. Combine a fast track designation with the obligation to control the designated weed within fifteen days and there is little time for consideration of 'best practices' or mechanical and biological controls. Additionally, there is no guidance in the bill to define 'best practices' and no language to consider using the least toxic chemicals first.

There is now no legal right for a landowner to post their land as a 'no spray' zone (if noxious weeds are controlled) and pursue damages without great legal cost to the landowner. There is no definition of 'drift' in existing law or in HB 2479. HB 2479 puts organic and specialty crop producers at a distinct economic disadvantage by threatening contamination and destruction of their crops. The potential increase in the use of such chemicals as 2-4D also impacts landowners attempting to establish native wildlife habitat on their property.

We urge you to reject HB 2479 and suggest an amendment that would simply establish a noxious weed advisory committee to provide additional, thoughtful recommendations for weed management policy.

KNRC also wishes to register an objection to the continuing practice of conducting hearings that do not allow time for both opponents and proponents to air their views. Unlike paid lobbyists or state employees, ordinary citizens and advocacy volunteers do not have the ability to reschedule visits to Topeka to testify on behalf of their interests.

The Kansas Natural Resource Council is a 501 c (3) membership organization that promotes environmentally responsible practices and sustainable natural resource policies to ensure the quality and abundance of these resources for future generations of Kansans.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Ashworth
Kansas Natural Resource Council