

Kansas Senate Natural Resources Committee
Jill Elmers- March 9, 2016
Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 2479

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to House Bill 2479. My name is Jill Elmers and I am a certified organic specialty crop grower on the east side of Douglas County. Below are my concerns with the current House Bill 2479.

1. I would request that the advisory council include a member who represents the growing number of specialty crop growers and organic growers in our state.
2. I am very concerned with the change of control in defining and listing noxious weeds from our elected Legislature to unelected persons. This takes away the power from the people of Kansas. Weeds are present on all farms in some quantity and it makes me very nervous to know one person can declare a plant a weed. This could affect our ability to make a living on our farm.
3. As mentioned above I am a certified organic farm, which means we practice a whole farm approach to dealing with weeds, pests, and nutrient management. We are able to receive higher prices for our products due to this certification. In order to maintain our certification we must keep our land free from synthetic chemicals for 3 years. This legislation does not define best and most practical methods of weed control, but it is assumed that herbicides will be part of that control. If this were to happen on my farm or I was to receive drift from a surrounding area, my certification would be nulled and I would not be able to sell my product at organic prices for three years. This would undoubtedly but me out of business, and my employees would be out of a job (2 year round and 6 seasonal).
4. Lastly, I'm very concerned about drift and the lack of protection we have against drift to our farm and other specialty crop growers. We grow many crops that are particularly sensitive to 2,4-D. If someone else, like the county, sprays chemicals near our farm and the chemicals drift and cause damage to my crops and even wipe out certain crops, they must be held liable for this damage as it would significantly affect my profitability for the season or multiple seasons. We are listed on the state and county sensitive crop list, so I feel we have done our part to make sure our farm is protected.

Please consider these points and I appreciate the opportunity to provide my comments.