

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 89
to the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
by Samantha Bonifas, Policy Intern and Flinchbaugh Fellow
Kansas Department of Agriculture
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Good afternoon, Chairman Rajhes and members of the committee. My name is Samantha Bonifas, and I am a policy intern for the Kansas Department of Agriculture through the Flinchbaugh Fellows program. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 89.

The Kansas poultry industry is a highly valuable industry despite being smaller in comparison to other sectors of Kansas agriculture. Kansas is the home to some innovative and high-value egg laying and poultry genetics companies in addition to the commercial egg layers and gamebird producers and turkey growers. Kansas generates approximately \$272 million in total value of annual poultry industry production.

Established in 1935, the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) was enacted with the goal of protecting the poultry industry from disease and has led to significant growth in the industry. The primary disease that the NPIP was drafted to address is Pullorum-Typhoid, which can have a chick mortality rate as high as 80%. Even if an affected bird recovers, it continues to be a lifelong carrier that can transmit the disease to their offspring.

In practice, the NPIP is a voluntary state–federal cooperative testing and certification program for poultry breeding flocks, hatcheries, and dealers. The objective of the NPIP is to provide a cooperative state–federal program through which new technology can be applied effectively to the improvement of poultry and poultry products by establishing standards for the testing of poultry breeding stock, baby chicks, poults, and hatching eggs to protect against certain diseases.

The vast majority of U.S. states prohibit the entry of any poultry shipments except those designated pullorum-typhoid clean. In order to certify that their shipments are pullorum-typhoid free, businesses participate in the NPIP to ensure their products have tested negative for pullorum-typhoid before leaving their home state. Most U.S. trading partners importing poultry and products from the United States also require NPIP participation. Accredited veterinarians may be requested to inspect breeder flocks participating in the NPIP for compliance with the standards and to issue health certifications. The NPIP has become such a commonly used program for disease eradication that it is often a requirement for participation in local state and county poultry exhibitions.

The poultry industry in the United States has experienced remarkable growth, largely due to NPIP, which combats diseases like pullorum-typhoid that have previously hindered production. By introducing disease testing and certification programs, the NPIP helped the poultry industry

to grow, including expansion on the national level of both small-scale and commercial operations. Over time, the industry-led NPIP expanded to address additional diseases, allowing the industry to thrive and produce billions of pounds of poultry and eggs annually which can be found on breakfast and dinner plates across the country.

Since 1945, Kansas has participated in the NPIP. The Division of Animal Health within KDA serves as the official state agency for the administration and oversight of NPIP programs in Kansas. This includes interstate commerce, import/export, disease surveillance, testing, permitting, and disease response plan activities. These activities have been carried out by the Division of Animal Health veterinarians at no cost to the businesses and individuals requesting the service.

SB 89 would enable KDA to assess a participant fee for any entity or person who wants to voluntarily participate in the NPIP program. This participation fee would not exceed \$50 annually, and this bill includes a 60-day grace period in order to remain a participant in the program in good standing. Additionally, anyone requesting testing or diagnostic services pertaining to NPIP would be assessed a service fee that would not exceed \$100 per location.

If an individual or business wanted to perform their own testing, KDA would continue to work with outside certified individuals who may elect to become a certified tester for pullorum-typhoid. Under SB 89, those interested in becoming a certified tester would be charged a fee not to exceed \$50. Once certified, an individual would be capable of performing poultry disease diagnostic services pursuant to the poultry disease control act.

As we have developed our proposal for this bill, KDA's animal health team has reached out to the Kansas poultry industry for their feedback and input and have received general support for this plan. In addition, we want to draw attention to the testimony which was submitted by poultry industry representatives for today's hearing. Their testimony indicates that they are supportive of the bill and in particular are in support of the poultry surveillance program.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 89. I'm happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.