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**Neutral Testimony on HB 2634 to
The House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee
By Josh Roe, Assistant Secretary
Kansas Department of Agriculture
March 10, 2016**

Good afternoon, Chairman Hutton and members of the committee. I am Josh Roe, Assistant Secretary for the Kansas Department of Agriculture, and I am here to provide neutral testimony on HB 2634, enacting the alternative crop research act.

HB 2634, as written, would allow basic and fundamental research and the economic feasibility in the area of industrial hemp production; form an industrial hemp coalition to assist in hemp production, research and commercialization; and allow for the issuance of grower licenses.

Currently, the most research available about this crop in the United States was completed in the 1940s. Based on this information we know the following: When heat- or drought-stressed, the seeds can express elevated levels of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), creating legal issues, as seeds testing above certain levels are considered illicit. Water and nutrient requirements are comparable to corn. Varieties that are currently developed are very tall and very susceptible to wind damage. The current production information also details that the crop does best under intensive tillage systems, which would be contrary to the no-till and reduced-tillage systems that nearly all Kansas farmers now employ. Due to the long growing season (165 days), this would not be a crop that could be used in a double-crop system.

That being said, Kansas Board of Regents institutions, if given the opportunity, might be able to solve many of the above challenges. The Kansas Department of Agriculture is well equipped to issue licenses to Regents institutions for industrial hemp research. These licenses and testing of hemp can be done with relatively minimal fiscal impact on the agency, making the cost of the licenses affordable.

Current federal law allows the cultivation of industrial hemp for research purposes only. Therefore, Sections 10-12 of this bill would constitute a violation of federal law. For this reason, we are appearing as a neutral conferee. However, it does clarify in the bill at several points that nothing shall be construed to violate federal law.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony. I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.