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To: House Assessment and Taxation Committee, Senator Kleeb, Chairman

From: Ryan Flickner, Kansas Farm Bureau

Date: March 10, 2016

Re: HB 2609 – Concerning Property Taxation

Chairman Kleeb and members of the Committee, Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony supporting the concept of placing spending limitations on local units of government.

KFB was supportive of the language passed last year in K.S.A. 79-2925b. Furthermore, KFB is generally supportive of the efforts that are occurring this year to attempt to "clean up" some of the language in the existing law. Additionally, KFB has made it clear we are also willing to ensure that the provisions of the bill are workable for local units of government. We have been meeting with interested parties on both sides of this issue throughout 2015 and during the current legislative session to see if there is some common ground to be found. Thus far, such common ground seems to be elusive.

KFB believes that there are numerous ways the current law could be improved, including many of the provisions in SB 316 and HB 2609. Specifically, KFB policy would be supportive of continuing to include the exemption allowing for increased budgets due to unfunded state and federal mandates on local units of government. However, the inclusion of the ability of local units of government to exempt themselves from the policy set out in statute through their home rule powers requires us to oppose HB 2609.

KFB is supportive of the general policy premise behind the current law, allowing voters to vote on increases in spending of local units of government which is disproportionally paid for by property taxes. KFB would like to ensure that whatever policy is put into place is workable for local units of government. However, until the parties on both sides of the issue are willing to work out potential differences to improve the current law, compromise language will be difficult to achieve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.