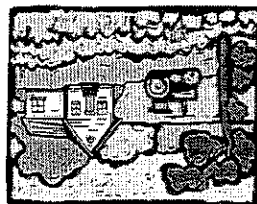


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Kansas Senate Agriculture Committee
Natalie Fullerton, Kansas Rural Center
January 26, 2016



KRC
KANSAS RURAL CENTER

Testimony in support of Senate Bill 314-Extending the local food and farm task force.

My name is Natalie Fullerton and I am the Community Food Solutions Program Director at the Kansas Rural Center (KRC). I work on KRC programs that seek to grow community efforts around production and sales of specialty crops and other farm products in Kansas. Since 1979, KRC has worked statewide to promote the long-term health of the land and its people through education, research, and advocacy for farmers, ranchers, communities, and others engaged in strengthening our state's farm, food and health systems.

KRC represents hundreds of Kansas farmers, ranchers and communities who grow food for their fellow neighbors by marketing through farmers markets, farm to school programs, restaurants, grocery stores and many other consumer outlets. The Local Food and Farm Task Force has prepared a report with recommendations that could be the start of positively impacting Kansas's small but growing fruit and vegetable sector, in particular, a sector with great potential for providing significant economic opportunities in our state, especially for younger generations wishing to return to their rural communities. I write today asking you to support S.B. No. 314 to extend the local food and farm task force. The importance of this request is outlined below.

- ☐ This past year, task force members have listened attentively to many food and farming grassroots advocates, organizations, and business leaders to learn about the challenges they face and the opportunities they envision. However, with each new perspective, new questions arose as well as new possibilities to explore.
- ☐ The food and farming system is complex and the unique issues and opportunities around local foods in Kansas necessitate additional time in order to adequately explore and accurately access further action and needs.
- ☐ Kansans support the vision of better incorporating Kansas farms into the Kansas food supply chain thereby strengthening Kansas's economy, community, environment, and health status. This passion is building in Kansas and the Local Food and Farm Task Force is the best vehicle for helping to successfully move these opportunities forward on a statewide level.

Increasing production of fruits, vegetables, other marketable food products grown, raised and made in Kansas for local markets would help diversify and thereby strengthen Kansas agriculture, the Kansas economy, and access to healthful foods. The task force has been a great success in bringing together grassroots, community groups, organizations and business from all sectors of the food and farming worlds. The continuation of their work will help ensure the vision Kansans support for our farm and food future in Kansas.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Natalie Fullerton