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5/18/2015

Legislators:

My name is Earl Roemer. I am a fourth generation agricultural producer from Scott City Kansas. With my agricultural leadership background related to both plant and livestock Biosciences I have had the privileged to be appointed by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schaefer and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to the United Sorghum Checkoff Program board of directors. During my tenure as a member of this national commodity organization board of directors I was appointed chair of the research committee. This committee provided funds through a RFP and proposal submission process that granted money through a committee, full board and USDA approval process. The organization and funding process was governed through a very strict set of rules called the Act and Order. The Act and Order was developed and oversight of the United Sorghum Checkoff Program was provided by an assigned staff member of the Agricultural Marketing Branch of the USDA. I have provided this information related to my experience and background in order to project my deep understanding of how an organization must responsibly administer public funds guided by a strict set of rules with oversight provided by qualified representatives. An organization that is charged with administering and granting public funds must be transparent and guided by responsible and professional leadership. My contact with the Kansas Bioscience Authority began soon after its inception post the enactment of the Economic Growth Act. In my opinion I found this organization poorly structured without a clear and concise foundation of governing rules. Oversight, transparency, and responsible staff leadership seemed to be lacking from the beginning of the enactment of the Bioscience Authority. This led to both public and state legislative distrust in this organization. Based on the allocation of funds throughout its history I would not call this organization a state program, but a regional economic development project that should have been funded locally. This is not a Kansas organization, but it is utilizing general account funds provided by all of this states citizens and businesses to conduct its business. I have been involved with agricultural related biosciences all of my life and do support the advancement of this industry in our state and realize its importance, but it must be conducted responsibly. Because of our current state budget crisis, priorities must be identified and hard decisions must be made. The continuation of a poorly organized and administered program cannot go on as it is currently structured. Based on this organization's irresponsible management of public funds and the number of changes that were required to be enacted throughout its history in order to continually build back the credibility of Bioscience Authority organization, it would be my opinion and recommendation that Senate Bill 305 be passed.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Earl Roemer", followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line.

Earl Roemer, President
Nu Life Market