

## MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Faber at 3:30 P.M. on February 18, 2008, in Room 783 of the DSOB.

All members were present except:

Josh Svaty- excused  
Clay Aurand- excused  
Vaughn Flora- excused

Committee staff present:

Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Ryan Hoffman, Kansas Legislative Research  
Gordon Self, Revisor of Statutes  
Kristen Kellems, Revisor of Statutes  
Florence Deeter, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Scott Carlson, Assistant Director, State Conservation Commission  
Steve Swaffer, Director of Natural Resources, Kansas Farm Bureau  
Mark Salley, Regional Environmental Coordinator, Army Central Regional Environmental Office,  
U. S. Army  
Mike Beam, Senior Vice President, Kansas Livestock Association  
Craig Phillips, Branch Chief, Public Works, Fort Riley

Others attending:

See attached list.

The Chair opened the hearing on **HB 2626 - farm and ranch land protection grant program, conservation easements** - and welcomed Scott Carlson, Assistant Director, State Conservation Commission (SCC), who testified in support of the bill (Attachment 1). He said the bill authorizes the SCC to provide state-funded grants to eligible entities for land easements contiguous to military facilities. He noted that in FY 2008 the SCC received \$311,500 as the basis for available matching federal funds, and, with continued funding, the SCC will be able to carry on the program.

Mark Salley, Regional Environmental Coordinator, Army Central Regional Environmental Office, U. S. Army, spoke in support of the bill (Attachment 2). He said the legislation will coordinate well with the Army's Compatible Use Buffer program, which maintains habitat for native species in areas threatened by development. He commented that the bill will help the Army sustain its mission.

Craig Phillips, Branch Chief, Directorate of Public Works, Fort Riley, testified as a proponent, saying that the bill serves well the interests of Fort Riley as well as the state's conservation efforts (Attachment 3).

Mike Beam, Senior Vice President, Kansas Livestock Association, speaking as a neutral party, praised the concept of conservation expressed by the bill, but, because of the restrictive language of the bill, recommended instead that the Committee take one of two alternative actions: either reconsider **HB 2147**, which was tabled by the Committee last session; or consider **SB 538**, a bill presently making its way through the Senate. He said either of these initiatives would provide wider support for the easement conservation program (Attachment 4).

Steve Swaffer, Director of Natural Resources, Kansas Farm Bureau, also speaking as a neutral party, testified in support of the concept of conservation easements on agricultural land, but observed that section five of the bill overemphasizes easements near military bases (Attachment 5). He expressed hope that a permanent funding mechanism could be provided for the program.

Written testimony was submitted with qualified support of the bill from RoxAnne Miller, Kansas Land Trust (Attachment 6).

Luke Bell, Director of Governmental Relations, Kansas Association of Realtors, provided written testimony supporting the concept of the bill but opposing subjecting property to additional taxes (Attachment 7). Chris

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee at 3:30 P.M. on February 18, 2008, in Room 783 of the DSOB.

Wilson, Executive Director, Kansas Building Industry Association, also provided written testimony opposing the use of tax dollars for landowners that restrict the land use for future generations (Attachment 8).

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2008, at 3:30 p.m.