

To: House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development
Representative Les Mason, Chairperson

From: Ryan Flickner, Kansas Farm Bureau

Date: February 15, 2017

Re: HB 2182- Written only Testimony Supporting HB 2182

Good morning Chairman Mason and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to present written testimony on behalf of the Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) in support of HB 2182. KFB is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 30,000 farm and ranch families through our 105 county Farm Bureau Associations.

The American Farm Bureau Federation has adopted a policy supporting the research and marketing of hemp and hemp products. KFB supports this national policy and has also adopted policies supporting agricultural product utilization.

As background, the 2014 Farm Bill included a provision allowing states through research institutions and departments of agriculture to grow and possess industrial hemp. It appears that 31 states have adopted legislation allowing research and development of industrial hemp products. (See USDA National Institute for Food and Fiber at <https://nifa.usda.gov/industrial-hemp> and the National Council of State Legislatures at <http://www.ncsl.org/research/agriculture-and-rural-development/state-industrial-hemp-statutes.aspx>) HB 2182 would allow Kansas to join those efforts.

KFB has been involved with many initiatives to grow the Kansas agricultural sector and the overall economy. We have also been actively engaged in the Governor's Water Vision which seeks to educate all Kansans on the value of water and encourage best management practices for use of water. It is our understanding that industrial hemp maybe a crop that provides producers with a reasonable economic income and uses less water and inputs than some of the current commercial crops grown in Kansas. We need statistically proven research to validate the benefits and costs of industrial hemp production in Kansas. We also need good data on marketing and value added uses of industrial hemp. With this type of data, producers will be willing to explore and incorporate industrial hemp in their operations. HB 2182 would authorize the Kansas Department of Agriculture and Kansas universities to conduct the needed research.

We are aware of the fiscal note associated with HB 2182 and the difficult budget issues facing the state. We are hopeful that Kansas could draw upon the research and implementation practices of other states to reduce the fiscal note and relieve the concerns of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

We are hopeful, that the legislature will view this bill as an opportunity to research another agricultural product, which can create value added products, that will grow our economy and make use of a renewable fiber resource. To that end, we believe the bill as introduced stands alone on its merits and should not be used to further conversations or debate relating to promotion, growth, or legalities of products or byproducts that have higher amounts of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) than industrial hemp at 0.3 percent or less. We ask your support for HB 2182.