

Taxation Committee Hearing

House Bill 2668

Ralph Reida, Cheney, Kansas

Beekeeper, Farmers Market Vendor, Board Member and Treasurer of the Kansas Grown ! Inc. Farmers Market in Wichita, Kansas.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of the passage of House Bill 2668.

Passage of this bill will have no direct effect on me and my business although passage will have a long range effect on people in Kansas having the ability to obtain locally grown Kansas agriculture products as the majority of those products grown by small local producers are sold at either Farmers Markets or the producers road side stand.

One of the main concerns we of the board of Kansas Grown ! Inc.'s Farmers Market have is the recruitment and retention of produce vendors for our market. Of 46 agriculture producer's at the three weekly markets we sponsor the average have been a member for over 17 years and are 60 years of age and older. There are only 5 that have participated less than 5 years and are under the age of 40.

At the Land of Kansas Farmers Market Conference held in Manhattan just last week recruitment and retention of produce vendors was an overriding concern of nearly all of those in attendance representing Farmers Markets all across Kansas.

Where do we look to recruit local agriculture producers? To small family farms, the urban gardener, from the 4-H clubs, people who have a need to supplement their income for one reason or another, and those who desire to make a living in the great Kansas outdoors.

There are a number of challenges that discourage those who want to get into and then to become successful producing agricultural products, space, knowledge, a market for their products and not the least is government regulations, including taxation.

Every year we are approached by those who have started on a small scale and find themselves with more product than they can consume themselves. They witness the customer traffic we have at our Wichita Farmers Markets and inquire how they can become a part of our markets.

They find the membership cost and weekly stall fee minimal but when they are informed they need to apply for a Retail Sales Tax Number and will have to collect and pay sales tax the response we get from most is "I don't even know if I can raise and sell enough to make it worth my while. I don't think it is worth the effort just to see if I can do this".

It is my feeling that if we are going to grow the amount of locally produced agriculture products available to the citizens of Kansas every effort needs to be made to help and encourage those wanting to too become successful. Lessening as many of the obstacles is sure to help .

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today so that I might encourage you to pass House Bill 2668.

If you have any questions I would be glad to try and answer them.

Again, Thank you.