

SB-307 Amusement Acts Ride Bill

2/5/2018

Testimony By Gary D. Starr DBA: Gary's Berries

My name is Gary D. Starr and owner of Gary's Berries in Grantville, Kansas. This family farm was started in 1993 as a home school project with his wife and three children and has evolved into a 35 acre Pumpkin Patch. Gary has a full time job as a Financial Advisor at Edward Jones to help fund his ministry by providing the Pumpkin Patch to the community. Gary's Berries is a family friendly environment with over 30 family games, pig races, corn maize, jumping pillows, goats, bunnies, pumpkin donuts, pumpkin bars, fudge, candied nuts, kettle corn, cotton candy, burgers, brats, fries, and walking tacos. Are you hungry yet? And most importantly, the Pumpkin Patch! You can climb on the hay rack ride that will take you to the pumpkin patch to pick your own pumpkin to take home. Gary's Berries is an agritourism farm that has provided education and experiences that have created life long memories for friends and families for generations. It is a destination for families each season to gather and take pictures in the huge rocking chair telling their own story of memories by showing growth and change.

I applaud the effort made by Senator Billinger to make it safer for amusement park rides and support SB 307. Safety is a priority for every guest that attends Gary's Berries in the Fall. However, we are an agritourism farm and since opening in 1993 we have had no accidents or injuries from the Hayrack Ride, Jumping Pillows, or Barrel Train that would fall under inspection as stated in this Bill. With no inspectors to date in the state of Kansas, you are forced to look elsewhere to find one qualified and this drives the price up substantially to an estimated \$5,000. Gary has over 25 years experience servicing and inspecting the equipment and has proven to be more than qualified to inspect his own equipment at the farm without any accident or injury caused to any of the guests that have attended Gary's Berries. As stated earlier, Gary's Berries does not generate the kind of revenue on a yearly basis to afford this kind of expense for an inspection of his Hay Rack Ride or Jumping Pillows. Getting inspectors licensed within the state of Kansas would be the first step to help the agritourism businesses in Kansas by hopefully keeping costs down to help them stay open. But, the best possible scenario would be to allow him to continue servicing and inspecting his own equipment that he has proven to be proficient doing.

If SB-307 is to pass, I would request it exclude agritourism as registered with the Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks and Tourism (KDWPT). A small seasonal pumpkin patch can not cover the added expense of these inspections. The budget is already extremely tight and with this addition it would be enough to shut them down, for good.

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