



2000 NORTH POPLAR
HUTCHINSON, KS 67502
TEL: 620.669.3600
800.362.3247
FAX: 620.669.3640

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House Agriculture Committee

House Bill 2215

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Agriculture Committee:

I am Virginia Crossland-Macha, President of the Kansas State Fair Board. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 2215. HB 2215 gives the State Fair Board a new tool in meeting the infrastructure needs of the Kansas State Fair. With 280 acres and 75 buildings, upkeep and modernization are essential to provide the facilities necessary for the over 327,000 annual attendees at the fair, as well as our 500 non-fair events.

One of the biggest challenges the Fair Board has is to put together a long-range plan for the Fair's Capital Improvements without some ability to project paying for those improvements. Identifying the building needs is only one part of the challenge. We must also have the financing.

In the past, the only option for the Fair would be to come to the Legislature with a request for funding — either through immediate appropriation or bonding and General Fund appropriation over several years. That is still an option but getting those funds is no certainty.

The Fair Board believes that, in this day and age, a better and potentially more reliable or controllable option would be to have a "501 C3" controlled by the board. With the passage of HB 2215, the Kansas State Fair Board can establish a building plan and then go about raising money to carry out the plan. Quite simply, that is all HB 2215 does.