



Date: February 3, 2022

To: Representative Ken Rahjes, Chairman, House Agriculture Committee

From: Brandi Miller, Kansas Cooperative Council

RE: Proponent Testimony on House Bill 2559

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, on behalf of the Kansas Cooperative Council (KCC), thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 2559. The KCC is a statewide association that works on behalf of all types of cooperatively structured businesses in Kansas. Some of the industries organized as cooperatives include agriculture, utility, financial and insurance. Simply, cooperatives differ from other businesses because they are member-owned, member-controlled, democratically governed, and profits are returned to member-owners. Many of KCC's members are farmer-owned agricultural cooperatives including two Kansas cotton cooperatives with three locations. In addition, the KCC also has a member with cotton gins located in Texas, and a regional member, Plains Cotton Cooperative Association, which is a grower-owned cotton cooperative with a new warehouse in Clearwater, Kansas.

According to USDA, 184,000 acres of cotton were harvested in 2020 in Kansas. A large portion of this cotton was ginned at a cotton cooperative. As cotton acres continue to increase in Kansas, cotton cooperatives are becoming more aware of the potential risk of the cotton boll weevil. The boll weevil once decimated the cotton crop, and without early detection through careful monitoring has the potential again. In the last five years, southern Texas has seen more cotton boll weevil migrating from Mexico. A boll weevil infestation would devastate Kansas cotton acres, overwhelming cooperatives and negatively impacting producers.

HB 2559 would provide the framework needed for producers to facilitate a monitoring program, and if ever necessary, an eradication program. We believe this will ease the concern of possible boll weevil introduction in the state, which would severely impact cotton cooperatives. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 2559, and we ask for your support of this bill.