



House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

February 9, 2022

Testimony - SB 2

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs:

I am Bryan Schulz, General Manager of the Kansas State Fair. Thank you for the opportunity to speak as a proponent to SB 2.

The mission of the Kansas State Fair is to promote and showcase Kansas agriculture, industry, and culture; create opportunity for commercial activity; and provide an educational and entertaining experience that is the pride of all Kansans. Even when your predecessors passed the legislation creating the framework for our county fairs, they knew entertainment was an important component of a successful fair.

Article 1 State and Other Agriculture Societies and Fairs K.S.A. 2-126. Purposes. *A county fair association may be organized and incorporated in each county of the state for the purpose of holding an annual fair and giving such public exhibitions and entertainments as its board of directors may determine to be for the improvement of the county and its citizens.*

Even though the Fair's main mission is to promote agriculture, industry, and the State of Kansas, we are –and always have been – in the entertainment business.

In a Hutchinson News article commemorating the Fair's centennial in 1913, Amy Bickel wrote:

“The two-headed lady is long gone, along with the bearded woman, the 180-pound anaconda and the electrified girl. And Sally Rand would never be able to perform her nearly-nude fan dance at today's Kansas State Fair.”

Just as these acts from yesteryear are not considered appropriate entertainment today, alcohol consumption is an important and accepted part of many people's entertainment and leisure activities. From our national pastime to college sports, bowling alleys, movie theaters and theme parks – beer, wine and spirits are just as natural as baseball, hot dogs, and apple pie.

Senate Bill 2 seeks to create, under the direction of the Kansas State Fair Board, a three-dimensional barrier on the Fairgrounds to allow the consumption of alcoholic liquor outside a designated alcohol consumption area.

Having served as a Fair General Manager for the past 14 years, I have witnessed first-hand alcohol consumption fairgrounds wide across the country, I believe it will have great benefits to our State Fair and, in fact, make the Kansas State Fair a better and more popular family experience. In other Fair locations, parents are enjoying a glass of wine or beer as they stroll through the grounds looking at the many vendors and exhibits. I have personally witnessed parents leaving their children with ride tickets for the midway while they go on to one of the alcohol vendor locations for an adult beverage. By allowing attendees to carry their beverage in designated locations, if they so choose, gives them an opportunity to browse other vendors' booths and shop.

One of the biggest family draws we have had in our Grandstand is our monster truck show. Monster trucks have traditionally highest beer selling events. The monster truck example is important for two reasons. First, it is one of the biggest crowds we have in our grandstand. Second, it had far and away more kids than any other event. Those are the crowds we need. We need kids coming to the Fair so that someday they will take their kids to the Fair. If we can make the total Fair experience more appealing to the parents by allowing them to do something they can do at practically every other entertainment venue we are competing with, then we need to do it.

Finally, SB 2 provides that for each remittance of the taxes collected upon the gross receipts derived from the sale of alcoholic liquor to consumers while on the Kansas state fairgrounds, 30% shall be credited to the state general fund, and the remainder shall be credited to the state fair capital improvements fund established pursuant to K.S.A. 2-223, and amendments thereto. The provisions of this subsection shall expire and have no effect if the state fair is located outside the city limits of the city of Hutchinson, Kansas.