



DEVINE, DONLEY & MURRAY
Governmental Affairs

534 S. Kansas Ave., Suite 830
Topeka, KS 66603
Office - (785) 246-8444
Fax - (866) 588-9472
www.devineanddonley.com

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Written Testimony in Support of SB 369

Allie Devine, Devine, Donley, & Murray LLC (785-640-9992 allie@devineanddonley.com)

On behalf of the coalition of Kansas Farm Bureau, Kansas Corn Growers Association, Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, and Northwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center.

Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Senator Rob Olson, Chairperson

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am presenting comments on behalf of Kansas Farm Bureau, Kansas Corn Growers Association, Sunflower Electric Power Corporation (Sunflower Electric), and Northwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center (EICI). (Hereafter referred to as "Coalition")

Two years ago, the Coalition commissioned a study to identify barriers to agribusiness expansion in rural Kansas. We gathered substantial information from many sources including economic development professionals, national site selectors, builders, financial institutions, businesses, and Kansas community leaders.

Our study identified a lack of housing as one of the main barriers to economic growth in rural areas. From our discussions with professionals within the building and finance communities, we believe that SB 369 may provide needed incentives for investors and developers to build in rural communities. As indicated in the Kansas Housing Assessment and in our study, rural Kansas needs all types of housing. SB 369 combined with existing programs such as the Moderate-Income Housing (MIH) program of the Kansas Housing Resource Corporation (KHRC) provide tools for rural development and rural housing.

Data from KHRC shows that investments in housing programs within KHRC is a good value for the state. KHRC has been able to leverage modest state investments into substantial projects. This is why we ask your support, at the appropriate time, for the transfer of \$50 million to the Kansas Housing Resource Corporation (KHRC) for targeted assistance through these housing programs. At this time, our request is moving through the House budgeting process, and we have started conversations with Senate Ways and Means members.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

