

HB2254
Support
Oral Testimony
Amy Roberts

Dear Members of the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my support and profound impact House Bill 2254 has had on my life and my female-owned and operated farm winery. Two years ago, my county categorized my farm winery as entirely commercial resulting in a substantial increase in property taxes. Faced with a daunting \$50,000 tax bill, I found myself on the brink of closing my doors. I had to use my savings to pay for this after I had just finished renovations on my barns and land to bring them up to county code requirements and I was a new business trying to make it after starting during COVID.

Unbeknownst to me, House Bill 2254 passed, and this past year, my county informed me that, as a registered agritourism entity, my farm winery, including land, buildings, and associated elements, would now be taxed as agriculture and Farm Homesite. This cut my tax bill in half (\$24,449)! This positive change has allowed me to develop my farm and put money into marketing to help the growth of my agritourism business. Which in turn helps increase visits from tourists and the community, creating more jobs for locals to help feed and provide for their homes, and helps with sales which creates more tax revenue for the state. By passing Bill 2254 it gives me a sense of empowerment to advocate for the growth of farm wineries and other agritourism businesses in Kansas.

Learning that House Bill 2254 might not have officially passed has left me anxious. The prospect of reverting to commercial taxation could jeopardize not only my Farm Winery but the thriving agritourism community in Kansas. If this bill does not pass, counties might go back to taxing vineyards and farm wineries like mine as commercial entities, making it financially unsustainable for us to continue operations. Kansas agritourism businesses are here to help the state increase revenue and provide education on agriculture to the community and to enhance the environment and to provide for the community.

I urge you to support and pass House Bill 2254, as it directly impacts the livelihoods of farmers and farm wineries throughout the state and their employees and their families. Farming is challenging enough and being commercially taxed puts an unbearable burden on our ability to survive and thrive.

Thank you for your understanding and consideration, I do appreciate your time.

Respectfully,

Amy Roberts

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