



**Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 446- Prohibiting foreign land ownership
Presented by Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs, Kansas Chamber**

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

Mister Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs for the Kansas Chamber. The Kansas Chamber represents small, medium and large businesses of all industry segments across the state. We appreciate the opportunity to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 446, which would prohibit land ownership by a person who is a citizen of a country other than the United States, unless they have dual citizenship, or a permanent lawful resident of the United States.

The subject of foreign land ownership has become a top issue in recent years as concerns over foreign adversaries such as China and Russia gaining a stronger presence in the United States have grown. However, SB 446 is much broader than addressing ownership interests by foreign adversaries.

Just last August, KMUW, Wichita's NPR affiliate, ran a story highlighting that Kansas was home to more than 600 foreign-owned businesses which collectively employ 75,000 Kansans. Companies such as Bombardier, Airbus and Garmin are owned by foreign entities and could be adversely affected by this bill.

Our concern is how legislation such as SB 446 could have unintended consequences on investment in the state by businesses who are not connected to or located in countries deemed to be foreign adversaries to the United States. SB 446 establishes a "state land council" that is responsible for reviewing, accepting and exempting land transactions for approval, or not, by foreign entities. SB 446 bans **ANY** foreign interest in land ownership, even 1% ownership by a group or foreign corporation or subsidiary and the land council has the authority under this proposal to determine their own rules by which exemptions will be granted. The council is authorized to meet every two months, which seems problematic if land acquisition and closing of transactions happens in between meetings.

We are not opposed to addressing ownership by foreign adversaries and are happy to work with interested parties in crafting a solution to legitimate threats to our country and state. However, we believe the structure and rules established in Senate Bill 446 are too broad to be seen as a reasonable solution.

In closing, we respectfully ask the committee to not support Senate Bill 446 as introduced. I'm happy to answer questions at the appropriate time.