

State of Kansas
House of Representatives

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Kristey S. Williams
Representative, 77th District

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HB 2168: Proponent Oral Testimony

Honorable Chairman Rahjes and committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for HB 2168 that would favorably position Kansas in the emerging agricultural industry of hemp fiber and grain processing and production. Industrial hemp production, not harvested with cannabinoids, is a growing industry that is currently stifled by uncertain and restraining regulations that deter investment and expansion. In Kansas, hemp regulations bundle fiber/grain production and processing with CBD production and processing into one all-inclusive category that causes intensified regulation which is not only difficult to navigate, but also increases the financial complexity and risk for investors.

In my hometown of Augusta, *Midwest Hemp Technology* buys grain and baled fiber from Kansas farmers and then processes the fiber and grain for protein flour and oil. This enterprise, to date, has been severely limited by costly annual fees, required background checks and fingerprinting, numerous inspections that lead to further capital investment, and over regulation. Without incremental changes through meaningful legislation, interested farmers and investors will steer clear of hemp and the wealth of opportunities emerging from this valuable resource. If Kansas wants to help farmers succeed, expand our economic footprint in a growing industry, and establish policy that helps reform the way we support production and processing capacity – then deliberate steps should be taken to open the door for Kansas farmers to successfully compete.

This bill addresses the need to redefine hemp fiber, grain, and seed, as well as improves the regulatory environment for Kansas producers and processors in a meaningful way. Without action, Kansas farmers will continue to struggle with identifying available markets, producers will struggle with deterring costs and cumbersome regulation, and opportunities to wisely invest will ultimately dry up leaving Kansas in the dust.

Thank you for considering and supporting the best, most practical, policies that will move Kansas in the right direction.

Serving the 77th,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kristey Williams', written over the typed name.

Rep. Kristey Williams