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Date: March 15, 2023  
To: Representative Ken Rahjes, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources  
From: Shahira Stafford, Kansas Cooperative Council  
**RE: Opponent, Written-only Testimony on House Bill 2168**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Kansas Cooperative Council (Co-op Council), thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 2168.

The Co-op Council is a statewide association that works on behalf of all types of cooperatively structured businesses in Kansas. Simply, cooperatives differ from other businesses because they are member-owned, member-controlled, and profits are returned to its member-patrons. Over 116,000 people are members of a cooperative headquartered in Kansas, and our 575 locations provide over 5,000 jobs that contribute significantly to the economic well-being of our rural communities.

Our farmer cooperatives handle, process, and market agricultural commodities; and we support industrial hemp as a viable alternative crop for Kansas farmers. Our position, however, remains consistent with federal guidelines and regulations set forth by the Kansas Department of Agriculture. While growing hemp was legalized in the 2018 Farm Bill, feed ingredients, including hemp products, falls under the jurisdiction of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Currently, the FDA has not approved hemp seed to be safe for feed to animals, particularly through production animals entering the human food chain.

The Co-op Council believes that further research is needed to determine industrial hemp's safety as a feed ingredient and to establish a regulatory framework for hemp to serve as a stable source of fiber, fuel, and food.

Until then, we urge Kansas lawmakers to exercise caution in supporting House Bill 2168 and a patchwork of state laws until hemp and hemp byproducts are FDA-approved as ingredients and standards are established for safe pet and livestock feed.