



# Kansas Chapter - Sierra Club

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## Testimony to Kansas Senate Natural Resources Committee Opposing SB 191

The Kansas Chapter of the Sierra Club opposes SB 191 because more corporate Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) will further harm the quality of life in western and central Kansas and accelerate the migration of the existing population from the region.

Western Kansas is currently home to 21 very large, corporate-owned or licensed swine feeding complexes ranging in size from 20,000 to 80,000 adult hogs each. Large CAFOs, especially swine CAFOs, emit noxious odors and require a large amount of water for proper operation.

In addition to providing for animals' cooling and hydration, a substantial amount of water is needed to reduce odor and to properly recycle wastewater to nearby fields for growing crops. Water is needed to reduce odor in two ways. First it is needed to wash down the barn floors. Secondly even more water is needed to dilute the waste in the anaerobic wastewater impoundments to achieve a minimal level of treatment.

Due to the high rate of evaporation in western Kansas and the addition of minerals to animal feed, swine wastewater has, over the years, become highly saline (exhibiting a high electrical conductivity). This greatly retards the growth of crops unless it is diluted with copious amounts of irrigation water. If the crops fail, the soil will exhibit excess levels of nitrogen. Indeed I have found many such cases in a recent review of a sample of swine CAFO nutrient utilization plans.

In recent years, some swine complexes have installed evaporation ponds to dispose of their wastewater. Not only is this inherently wasteful of our limited water supplies but, after baking there for 10 to 15 years, this material will become unusable for growing crops and a serious disposal problem.

As you know the high plains aquifer in many areas of western Kansas is being rapidly depleted. Thus, it is likely that CAFOs will skimp on the use of water needed for proper operation. Neighboring farmers and nearby town-folk will suffer excessive odors and a reduced quality of life. Worse, their farming livelihood will be threatened by increased competition from CAFOs for limited water supplies.

We believe that existing residents deserve the right to defend themselves from another influx of noxious CAFOs and not be constrained by decisions made 200 to 300 miles away in Topeka. If the legislature passes SB 191, you can look forward to a continuing flight of existing farm families out of the region. At a minimum, before proceeding, you should commission an *independent* study of the economic, environmental and cultural impacts of bringing yet more massive CAFOs into Kansas.

SEN. NATURAL RESOURCES

Date 3-7-13  
Attachment # 4