

Chair Hoffman and members of the House Agriculture Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to come and speak today. My name is Cecilia Pruitt. I am a registered nurse, and I have come today to speak on behalf of our Kansas residents without a voice, our children.

Children are not simply small adults. They are not only psychologically immature, they are physically immature. This is particularly true of their respiratory system. Children require 20-50% more air than adults. Their airways are smaller. Smaller airways are more at risk from constriction and mucus plugging. Mucus is actually good, it works to capture foreign matter and transport it out of the body. But, smaller tubes simply plug easier than larger ones. The lining of their respiratory track and lungs is thinner. That makes it easier for foreign materials like chemicals to cross into their bloodstream. Particulate matter is heavier than air and so drifts downward. Children are shorter and therefore are breathing in the air that is most concentrated with particulate matter.

I have followed the new poultry farming 2.0. I am impressed with the dry manure storage and the nutrient management plans. I am however concerned that nutrient management plans are only required for farms with more than 100,000 chickens. How will waste be applied when no nutrient management plans are required for less than 125,000 chickens? Waste management plans do not require testing of the soil prior to fertilizer/waste application. Where does this leave our children that utilize well water. Will their parents realize the importance of having the nitrate level in their well water checked on a regular basis? Will this be affordable for them? Pregnant women and infants are especially vulnerable to nitrates in the water. I do know that not everything is different in this new poultry farming. Chickens still do not sweat. This means they need to have giant exhaust fans blowing over them 24 hours a day. It stands to reason that when chicken houses are enlarged, the fans will need to be more forceful.

Chicken waste contains over 150 pathogens (CDC). E-coli is one I am certain all of you recognize. John Hopkins, Center for a Livable Future just published information last December showing that bacteria from chicken CAFO's has been documented to spread up to 3,000 meters from poultry operations. Coming back to children, their immune system is immature. Their blood/brain barrier is not fully developed. This barrier is just what it sounds like, the body's way of protecting the brain and neurological system.

Ammonia is another concern. As I was researching the effects of ammonia on children, I actually found a multitude of information regarding how ammonia negatively effects chickens. No wonder these chicken houses have to have these giant fans, ammonia is deadly to the chickens. What about our children on the other side of the exhaust fans?

I am afraid for our children. I cannot help but question why anyone would consider bypassing research and placing their welfare in danger. We do not know the effects of placing 333,000 chickens only 1320 feet from where they attend school, play, and eat. I implore you, slow down and proceed with research before you pass this bill. Put our children first.

I have a second request. I am asking each of you to favorably consider Representative Karleskint's legislation supporting transparency in our state. Our state is suffering from its' present reputation of secrecy. This secrecy is not good for residents or companies. I was personally a part of pushing Tyson out of Tonganoxie. I know we caused a lot of bad publicity for Tyson. I personally wonder whether they were not as mislead as we were. Tyson was not a good fit for my community. We did not have the available workforce. We do not have adequate, affordable housing, police, fire, or schools for a drastic influx of people.

I am not against agriculture. I believe there are areas in our state that would desire such a company under the present regulations, but that needs to be their decision. A community desiring such an industry would be inviting and welcoming. The result would be different for everyone involved.

Sincerely,
Cecilia Pruitt, Tonganoxie KS