

To the Agricultural Committee Representatives:

Thank you for challenging me to think about my stance on the Chicken CAFO issues once more. I'd like to be here today to speak for myself but I've recently had surgery which does not permit me to drive for another week.

I'd like to first tell you who I am. I am a granddaughter, great granddaughter, great great and great grand daughter of farmers dating back through Central Kansas, from the Ukraine and from the Netherlands. My ancestors knew how to farm and could take any land that was given to them and make it into rich farmland. Farming for my grandfather was hard. They were poor but they were rich. I watched my grandmother pick weeds out of the wheat fields surrounding their home. We picked green beans forever and a day and I personally went on harvest with my grandfather who was a custom harvester. I loved that life.

I am the daughter of an engineer who worked designing small square bailers for 40 years. I grew up in the country surrounded by farmers. Farmers who struggled to make a living but who were rich in spirit and land. I watched my neighbor lose his dairy farm and although he considered pig farming he respected his neighbors enough to become a thin stone veneer installer/contractor.

I am an architect. I used my father's small square bales of straw to build our sustainable home near Tonganoxie.

Maybe you might think I'm different than my ancestors but I think I'm very much the same. They used what they could from the land that they loved to forge a living, albeit a difficult one at times. They weren't afraid of hard work and neither am I.

Since September, I have literally exhausted myself trying desperately to find the "facts" that support my position against chicken CAFOs and to speak out about it only to realize that our Senate and Representatives will vote for this bill if they are not aware of the facts. I've spent hundreds of hours to date attending hearings, political gatherings, reading U.S. EPA Toxic Release Inventory Reports and studying demographic comparisons on the datausa.io website, not to mention violationtracker.goodjobsfirst.org/parent/Tyson-foods among others. While I've had a few civil conversations with pro-Tyson supporters, I simply cannot find where anyone benefits from industrial farming except the industry itself. One only needs to glance at the plethora of articles posted by Citizens Against Project Sunset (CAPS) on Facebook to gain perspective that nearly 7,000 CAPS supporters, just in the northeastern portion of Kansas alone, were able to educate themselves quickly. The site generated 2,500 posts, 32.7k comments and 163.6k reactions in just under 2 months after its creation. These are not paid lobbyists, these were concerned citizens who used their unpaid time to rapidly educate themselves and others out of fear and desire for preservation. Preservation of what?

Last month I attended K-State's associate professor of animal science Scott Beyer's testimony to you endorsing SB 405. First, he's paid to do a job and if it was the first time I was hearing about CAFO's and chicken operations I would've thought it was a good thing for Kansas. But I know better, as I previously stated, I've done my research. But they are counting on you because you are busy and they have told you what you wanted to hear.

What they haven't told you:

On Pollution: WATER. We have a water problem in Kansas. It's not going to get better. Nitrates from factory farming are having an effect nationally that that's a fact. Scientists have traced the cause of the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico at the size of Connecticut and Rhode Island put together to agricultural runoff. Furthermore, these chicken industrial plants need 2-million gallons of fresh water each day to run their plant. We have a water issue that is going to affect our children, your children, our grandchildren. How can the Ogallala aquifer support all of the factory farms in Nebraska and the struggling corn farmers in Western Kansas, not to mention any new factory farm industries that could end up in our state? Our scientists know so much! Was the senior trial attorney for the EPA in the late 1990's uninformed, inexperienced, or just mad when he had never seen a company (Tyson) continue to discharge pollutants into our waterways even as they were being investigated? Never mind that the practice continued after the investigations were completed and we are still addressing Tyson water pollution in Missouri with Lawsuits to this day! Be informed that Tyson has even

rejected shareholder resolutions to reduce water pollution, so this should be a sign that any promises by Tyson or other industries for the future of our water should be taken lightly. Tyson, and other animal industrial giants, themselves have to report to the EPA their polluting discharges and from 2010 to 2014 (the last report) they were in 2nd place for the most polluting company in the states.

It is a fact that chickens poop more per pound than cattle, with a higher concentration of water-polluting nitrogen and phosphorus. How has this affected other states? Look at Toledo, Ohio, and Tulsa, Oklahoma and the issues it caused their waterway systems and the lawsuits it faced as a result. Large industry like Tyson does not help with this side, the chicken waste, of the business. It's the farmers' responsibility and eventually the state has to deal with it. Lake Cheney for example is already over polluted with phosphates and nitrates.

Ammonia from factory farming affects the elderly and children, especially those who have asthma. It's in Kansas's own KDAD regulations that CAFO's cannot be near senior living facilities and so therefore Kansas is aware of its negative effects.

I urge you to consider that before companies make promises, we should see how they have fixed their existing chicken operating plants to prove they can do what they promise before they ever build a new one.

JOBS: 1,600 jobs. As for Leavenworth county, the median household income & poverty rate did not justify adding a poverty inducing factory to its demographics. I know Kansas is suffering and farmers are suffering but find ONE Chicken CAFO community that is thriving. You cannot because not one exists. Furthermore, Tyson factory work isn't for locals. Farmers maybe, but not the factory itself. Tyson freely admitted they struggled to hire cheap legal help. They wanted to be near the prison so they could use prison help. There are studies on what slaughtering millions of chickens does psychologically to ex-convicts and we'd be good to look at those studies and what we will be dealing with when these people burn out of that job. Let's face it, Tyson does not have a great track record of treating employees well. Tyson, before April of 2017, not even a year ago, finally agreed to stop making their employees wear diapers or soil themselves while butchering chickens on the job. Tyson isn't winning lawsuits.

The farmer: I think this will be covered by others but they don't thrive nor do our county roads. We have to fix these roads, it's our responsibility not Tysons, for their dozens of trucks that drive on them each and every day. These companies won't commit to staying in the area. Look at the town of Cherokee, Iowa. The taxpayers will go broke trying to recover from the mess these CAFO's leave behind.

As educated Americans, shouldn't we aim higher or is Tyson really it? In the 1970's there wasn't one reported case of type 2 diabetes in children. One only needs to look at www.diabetesforcast.org to see that it is a rising epidemic that is the 7th leading cause of death. In one year, from 2011 to 2012, 17,900 children were newly diagnosed with type 1 diabetes and 5,300 children were diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. This number will only rise if we think that fast food chicken nuggets are the answer. Demographically, the lower income children will suffer more because fast food is cheap. Low income people are the type of people CAFO's attract and Kansas will be in a downward spiral of poorer people with more health issues than ever before.

For Kansas to be better, to be different, to change our future, we cannot look to a system that does not work. We must look to a system that does! We are to be stewards of our land and only then will be we fruitful.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

Sincerely,

Suzanne Regier, Tonganoxie KS