



Supporting Family Farms and Local Food Production

Tuesday, January 31, 2017

Chris Sramek

Vice President of Consumers

High Plains Food Co-op

112 S 4th St Atwood, KS 67730

HB 2143 Testimony For Committee on K-12 Education Budget

Dear Rep. Campbell and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns about the requirement for school boards to go through the Dept. of Adm. for information technology equipment, services and software, food and fuel. (exception... Locally within 1% of total cost) **proposed in** HB 2143 Requiring school districts to procure specific spend categories through the department of education.

As a community leader and board member of the High Plains Food Co-op I/We oppose this bill.

For the last 10 years, our co-op with over 400 farm and community members from 15+ northwest Kansas Counties, uniting in local food production and emerging local food markets in Denver and rural communities in northwest Kansas and eastern Colorado. Our food-hub business model is a tool that local food and specialty crop farmers can use to increase farm revenues and bring family members back to northwest Kansas farms. With commodity prices lower than they have been in decades; many family farms are looking for ways to increase their income and our food-hub model offers this opportunity. We are currently working with two school districts in Rawlins and Cheyenne County, who have farm to school programs that purchase and serve food from school farms, gardens and greenhouses as well as starting purchases from member food producers. We are working with the Northwest Kansas Healthy Communities Initiative and the Western Prairie Food, Farm and Community Alliance to broaden this program to other school systems in northwest and other areas of Kansas. Removing the purchasing power from local control and putting a 1% cap on local food purchases would be devastating to expanding our work and closing one of our small family farmer's key market opportunities with the Farm to School programs.

To close, as a representative of my community of Atwood, Kansas and the High Plains Co-op member farmers and consumers of locally grown healthy foods, we wholeheartedly **oppose** this bill.

If you have any questions and would like additional testimony please reach me anytime.

Thank you Rep. Campbell and Committee for your time to hear our concerns,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Sramek". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Chris Sramek

(785) 626-6082

info@highplainsfood.org