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**Testimony before the House Commerce, Labor & Economic Dev. Committee
Written Only In Support of SB90**

Provided by Christy Hopkins, Legislative Committee Member
western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance

Thank you, Chairman Tarwater and members of the committee for allowing this testimony on behalf of the western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance. We support SB90 because Network Kansas has aided small businesses in rural Kansas.

Each fall the membership of the western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance (wKREDA) develop a legislative position paper that reflects our concerns and solutions for matters that impact rural development. wKREDA supports the work of NetWork Kansas because they offer a variety of programs that provide assistance to communities in rural areas.

The Kansas Center for Entrepreneurship DBA NetWork Kansas supports the economic needs of entrepreneurs throughout the wKREDA region. One of the mechanisms utilized by Network Kansas to support these efforts is the Kansas Entrepreneurship Tax Credit which is utilized to raise money for program support and two funding partnerships: StartUp Kansas and the Entrepreneurship (E-) Community Partnership. StartUp Kansas and E-Communities provide matching loans for startups and expansions of existing businesses in rural communities across Kansas. NetWork Kansas also provides matching loans and investments to businesses in the wKREDA region through the Kansas Capital Multiplier Loan and Investment Fund.

wKREDA Region Impact

- Provided more than 8.947 million in matching loans to 248 businesses which created and/or retained 1,500+ jobs
- Eighty-three percent (84%) of the funded businesses have come in communities of 10,000 or less with startups comprising 44% of the businesses funded
- Twenty-five (25) wKREDA communities have achieved (E-) Community standing
- Leveraged more than \$87+ million in additional capital
- Provided Economic Gardening assistance to twenty (20) businesses which created and/or retained 688 jobs

wKREDA is a coalition of people in 55 western Kansas counties who've decided to pool their resources, both human and financial, to work together for the common good of western Kansas. Formed as a grassroots organization in 1994 wKREDA's members maintain a collaborative affiliation to achieve our individual and collective rural development goals.

For More Information:

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