

TESTIMONY

House Bill 2601

“Disposition of state real property; authorizing the state board of regents on behalf of Kansas state university to sell certain real property in Riley county and Cherokee county, Kansas, and Douglas county, Nebraska”

House Higher Education Budget Committee

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Kansas State University

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Madame Chair and Members of the House Higher Education Budget Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on House Bill 2601. My name is Ernie Minton and I serve as the Dean of the College of Agriculture and the Director of K-State Research and Extension.

Section 1 of the bill references the authorization to sell a portion of property that is part of K-State’s North Agronomy Farm near Kimball Avenue and College Avenue in the City of Manhattan. The sale of this property is key to a strategic partnership with the Edge Collaboration District that will open possibilities for a K-State agronomy innovation hub and create a coordinator connection with existing grain science facilities. The department’s North Farm facilities were purchased in 1909, shortly after the Agronomy Department was established in 1906. The farm has supported the department’s significant contribution to the development of Kansas agriculture and is essential to the ongoing success of its global leadership in food systems and agriculture research. The sale of a portion of this property is part of an overall master plan to enhance economic development while retaining the importance of crop and soil research sites immediately adjacent to main campus. The master plan includes the creation of a future Agronomy Innovation Hub — a model farm teaching, research, and extension facility focused on emerging themes such as robotics, vertical farming, rhizome research, recruitment, and retention, and will serve as a new iconic front door to the Farm, celebrating industry partnership and the future of agriculture.

Section 2 of the bill references the sale of real estate located in Cherokee county. In 2019, the legislature authorized the sale of land near Chetopa, Kan. that had been used for pecan experimental research. While the sale of the land has been completed successfully, a small parcel housing an office space was overlooked. HB2601 authorizes the sale of this remaining real estate.

On behalf of the K-State College of Agriculture and K-State Research and Extension, we appreciate the opportunity to share this information and request your concurrence.