

**Testimony in support of H.B. 2766**

**TO: House Committee on Education Budget**

**FROM: Emily Hunter, Executive Director of the Symphony in the Flint Hills**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 2766. I am Emily Hunter, executive director of the Symphony in the Flint Hills. The Symphony in the Flint Hills is an annual outdoor concert series that debuted in June 2006 and has sold out every year since. The symphony moves each year to a different site in the Flint Hills, providing an opportunity for the public to visit private rangeland. The event is organized by Symphony in the Flint Hills Inc., a grassroots non-profit organization with a mission: *to heighten appreciation and knowledge of the Tallgrass Prairie by providing opportunities to experience symphonic music and place-based education in the Kansas Flint Hills.*

**Vision:**

- Increase awareness among the general public about the ecological and cultural significance of the Flint Hills
- Produce an on-going series of symphonic concerts in the Kansas Flint Hills
- Provide an economic boost to rural Kansas prairie communities
- Combine the human, environmental and financial resources of rural grasslands people to accomplish together what none can do alone
- Uplift our spirits and celebrate with grateful hearts our “home on the range”

**To summarize the economic impact of Symphony in the Flint Hills....**

At the completion of the Seventh Annual event to be held June 9, 2012 Symphony in the Flint Hills will have spent \$5,838,802 in direct dollars...73% of which has gone to Flint Hills enterprises. The remaining 17% was spent on Kansas City Symphony fees, tent rental, and insurance.

The annual budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 is \$1,186,801. Annual payroll for six employees is \$215,000. Ticket revenue \$487,500 covers 41% of expenses.

Over 52,000 people will have attended the event and visited the Flint Hills averaging 7,500 each year.

750 volunteers from 125 Kansas towns and 11 states beyond Kansas helped to staff the event in 2011.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

To learn more, visit [www.symphonyintheflinthills.org](http://www.symphonyintheflinthills.org)