

**To: Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs, Senator Mike Thompson, Chair**

**From: John Donley, Kansas Farm Bureau**

**Date: February 7, 2024**

**Re: Testimony opposing SB 446 – establishing the state land council**

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Chairman Thompson and members of the Committee, on behalf of Kansas Farm Bureau, I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to SB 446. KFB is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 30,000 farm and ranch families through our 105 county Farm Bureau associations.

As the topic of foreign ownership of agricultural land has come to the forefront since the 2022 election, KFB has been at the forefront of the issue to protect the private property rights of our members. KFB is strongly in support of having a healthy discussion about the national (and state) security risks that Kansas and the United States currently has. In fact, we have had those discussions with our members. Our members have told us, loud and clear, that this issue should not be focused on ag land, elected officials should analyze the true risks to our security and not use agricultural land as a scapegoat to pretend we are doing something while not actually analyzing the true issues. **Let's have the real discussion.** Let's identify the critical infrastructure, critical weaknesses, etc. where we can truly protect the state and the nation. I suspect that does not involve a "state land council" reviewing a lease of a farmhouse on 5 acres in Ellsworth County. This bill is simply governmental overreach, and it is being used as a means to avoid the difficult discussion in the name of political expediency.

Kansas Farm Bureau has long been an organization that supports private property rights and free markets. When legislation such as SB 446 is introduced, we naturally look at the legislation with a skeptical view. Putting restrictions on the ownership of real property is something that should be taken very seriously and not just be an issue that is raised to "get a vote on China." As you consider this bill, I want to ask you to seriously consider what the policy motivation is behind this legislation.

Generally, KFB feels that this issue is better addressed at the federal level. There are numerous federal laws dealing with foreign land ownership. Additionally, there are several bills that have been introduced dealing with the specific issue of land ownership by foreign entities.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that SB 446 creates more government, a "land council," to decide who can and cannot own land in the state of Kansas. The bill sets very few standards for the analysis that this council should use. The policy being promoted by this bill is a creation of more government to control the citizen's private property rights in an attempt to combat communist countries. Let that sink in for a bit....

I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.

