



Blythe Family Farms, LLC

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Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Kansas House Agriculture Committee,

I am before you today as a landowner, cattle rancher and constituent to speak **in support of House Bill 2743**. Blythe Family Farms, LLC is owned and operated by my husband Duane Blythe and me, along with our five grown children, who are all shareholders. We have been told by those kids that three of them would like to return to the operation one day, but at this time we do not have enough land or resources to support another family. In order to find their niche and bring in additional revenue, each of our kids interested in being part of the day to day operations has attended college with this in mind.

We have two sons currently at Kansas State University in their senior year. Eric will graduate in May with a degree in Animal Science, with a plan to return to the operation and take over the cowherd. Tyler will graduate in December with a degree in Ag Technology Management, and his plan is to manage the farming operation. Our oldest son, Trenton, graduated in May 2016 with a degree in Wildlife and Outdoor Enterprise Management—a degree specifically created to teach individuals all they need to know to open their own hunting enterprise.

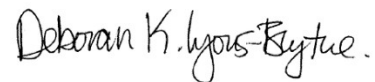
Through the years, we have been focused on conservation and many of our improvements to pasture and crop ground have been done with wildlife in mind. In addition, we have learned that what is good for cattle, is also good for wildlife. We have an abundance of deer, turkeys and game birds on our land. Trenton has always enjoyed hunting and today he has a fully licensed, viable outfitting service in operation and holds the permits to raise pheasant and run Controlled Shooting hunts. We hope that this business will provide him the additional income he needs to supplement his income from our ranch. I have attached a copy of the information from Kansas State University outlining the major.

The bottom line for us, is that in order to be able to support our family and allow them to be operators on the family land and of the family business, we must be able to provide new opportunities for income to them. We all know that crop prices are low, and land prices are high. The goal that my husband and I have ultimately is to pass on this land that was purchased in 1890 by John Randolph Blythe, owned and improved by four generations, to the fifth generation—our children. Our hope is that the land will stay together in their ownership to pass on to subsequent generations. But in order to do that, we must be willing to think creatively on income sources and take advantage of opportunities.

Currently Trenton is raising pheasant and running Controlled Shooting hunts, and he plans to one day expand to deer and turkey hunts. He is also the sole labor force, supporting me on the ranch. As we look to the future and want to welcome two other sons to the ranch, we need available every option to encourage young people to return to the rural areas and enhance their income, utilizing the resources that their land and lifestyle provide.

I believe that HB 2743 is crucial to having the ability to expand our income options, and therefore the ability to support the sustainability of family farms in Kansas. Hunting enterprises provide additional income to farm families, allowing young people to move back to rural areas and be involved in daily operations of their family farms. Ultimately, that means more farms will stay together, maintain their land in production, and increase the sustainability of rural Kansas. I support HB 2743.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah K. Lyons-Blythe".

Deborah K. Lyons-Blythe