

To: House Committee on Judiciary
From: Ryan Flickner, Kansas Farm Bureau
Date: May 1, 2019
Re: Proponent written only testimony for SB 219

Chairman Patton and members of the Committee,

On behalf of Kansas Farm Bureau I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments today in support of SB 219. 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.

Kansas Farm Bureau has been a proponent of increasing enforcement of scrap metal thefts for many years. We were part of the coalition that brought this issue to the legislature and helped pass the current law. We have repeatedly explained the frustration farmers and businesses experience when they go to start equipment and find parts have been stolen or lines cut making the equipment unusable. Many of our members are rural residents and worry that persons are trespassing on their property and vandalizing equipment. They are concerned that confronting trespassers/thieves, who may or may not be armed, could lead to serious injuries.

Since the legislature began debating how to reign in and deter scrap metal thefts in 2014, thefts have continued. The number of thefts varies with the prices paid for scrap metal. However, the seriousness of the problem has continued and in some cases increased. We know of many farmers who have experienced theft of wiring, irrigation sprinkler parts, or other equipment. In one case, thieves hooked their truck to the electrical lines of a new dairy, yet to be populated, and pulled all of the new wiring out of the building. This cost the landowner over \$100,000 and a delay in use of the facility.

Kansas farmers and ranchers were pleased when the scrap metal laws were passed in 2015. They are also frustrated that full implementation of the laws has been delayed by lack of funding. SB 219 provides a reliable source of funding to provide law enforcement the tools they need to identify and prosecute thieves and lessens the regulatory burden on scrap metal dealers. We ask for your support of SB 219.