

TO: Senate Committee on Local Government

FROM: Tim Stroda, President-CEO, Kansas Pork Association

DATE: February 16, 2021



Written testimony in opposition to SCR 1606

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Tim Stroda. I am the President-CEO of the Kansas Pork Association. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition of SCR 1606.

Others today will offer legal and technical reasons why Constitutional home rule authority is problematic. I want to tell you why it could be detrimental to entire industries based on the experience of Kansas pork producers.

Beginning in the late 70s, technology and economies of scale were becoming more important throughout agriculture. Pork farmers learned that raising pigs indoors actually uses fewer natural resources. This is because farmers can control the pig's feed, water, and temperature. This allows the pigs to do what they do best – make more bacon.

As pork farmers gained experience with barns, they found they could also put a large number of them in one location. Because Kansas was known for its open spaces and access to plentiful grain, several swine production companies sought to locate in the state.

These firms contracted with local farmers to build barns and raise pigs. Farmers welcomed the opportunity to supplement their incomes especially in areas where drought or low commodity prices had stressed financial resources. Many rural economic developers courted the swine industry to stimulate rural communities. It worked and swine operations began building with the approval of county and state permitting officials.

In the mid-90s, reports of swine operations polluting waters in other states hit the news in Kansas. Local residents were alarmed and began questioning whether Kansas had proper environmental controls. Neighbors were fighting neighbors in some places while other counties sought more expansion. Soon counties began passing resolutions either banning facilities completely or requiring extensive regulation that increased costs substantially.

A patchwork of regulation was emerging that could potentially stop some facilities or cost others tremendously with no assurances the restrictions would protect the environment. Soon litigation challenging state and local governmental action began and it was clear the state legislature was the only forum that could address the issues.

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In 1998, a special legislative committee held daily hearings on the benefits and risks of the pork industry. The committee heard debate over separation distances, county approval processes, zoning, as well as environmental controls for dust, odor, and pests. Groups including the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA), the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Kansas State University, KPA, the Sierra Club, Kansas Livestock Association, Kansas Farm Bureau, and the Kansas Association of Counties provided input into the process.

State legislation was passed to include specific rules for swine production. Those laws were crafted with the assistance and guidance of experts from all sides of the debate. That level of expertise was not affordable for many counties. The statewide discussions assured that reason, not emotion, guided the regulatory process.

Because of Kansas' statewide approach, the pork industry continues to be a vital part of the state's economy. Our farmers also continue to be good neighbors. Please see the next page of our testimony for some facts about our industry.

We oppose SCR 1606 because we believe its passage would once again threaten the swine industry with emotionally-driven regulations that vary from county to county.

Thank you for allowing me to provide this written testimony.

Kansas Pork Industry Facts



Pork farmers make Kansas better

1. There are about 1,000 hog farms in Kansas. Of these operations, 150 produce over 99% of the state's pigs.
2. Kansas is the number ten state in hog and pig inventory producing about three percent of the nation's total.
3. In 2020, Kansas producers sold 3,993,992 market hogs, feeder pigs and seedstock with a gross market value of \$442,070,177. These hogs produced over 700,000,000 pounds of pork which helps feed millions of people in the U.S. and abroad through exports.

Pork industry important to Kansas economy

Kansas pork farms consume over 30 million bushels of grain. Primarily, these operations utilize Kansas-grown grain sorghum and corn. At January 2021 prices, the pork industry will spend over \$150,000,000 on grain sorghum and corn this year.

Kansas pork farms also consume the equivalent of over eight million bushels of soybeans through soybean products. At January 2021 prices, the pork industry will spend over \$104,000,000 on soybean products this year.

Kansas pork farmers support suppliers of goods and services to their businesses. A short list of vendors includes:

- **Feed suppliers** - grain and nutritional supplements.
- **Construction** - includes new building and maintenance.
- **Labor** - as with any business, growth means increased labor needs.
- **Supplies** - pork producers utilize Main Street businesses for a vast array of items ranging from veterinary supplies to office supplies.
- **Equipment** - pork producers utilize specialty equipment for many tasks including nutrient management.
- **Utilities** - gas, propane and electric.
- **Trucking** - producers utilize trucking to bring grain to the farm as well as hauling hogs to market.
- **Services** - pork producers utilize many services along Main Street including financial, medical, accounting, legal, engineering, and veterinary.