

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

BILL NUMBER: 2168

Support  Oppose  Neutral

Testimony Will Be: In Person Oral  Webex Oral  Written Only

For Meeting on Thursday, March 14, 2024

Testimony By: Kelly Rippel

On Behalf Of: Kansans for Hemp / Planted Association of Kansas

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Chairman Peck and Committee Members,

I want to first thank you for your dedication to serving our great state. I also wish to commend you for the ongoing support of Kansas' industrial hemp program you made possible, and holding a hearing on HB2168. As a lifelong Topekan and appointed member of the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Industrial Hemp Advisory Board since the program's inception, I am honored to be supporting the emerging industry. The proposed legislation before you is an effort after identifying fundamental changes leaders would like to be considered with the intent of jump-starting the agricultural hemp industry for farmers and communities.

As a result of continuous data gathering and meetings with stakeholders, Kansas Department of Agriculture and other groups have facilitated discussions around how hemp can best serve Kansas. Through these efforts the area of fiber/grain has been identified as a key priority in 2024 and beyond.

In order to grow agricultural hemp – even as a rotation crop in Kansas – it currently requires an upfront cost of \$1200. Lowering the hemp fee to \$500 helps send a message that the state supports farmers and the crop. As provided in supplemental information other states have much lower fees or none at all, because their hemp programs are no longer administered by their departments of agriculture, but rather the USDA. Right now eight states have their hemp program through USDA with more considering the transition, including Nebraska, in 2024.

Reasons for such transitions include: #1 many programs were also established as wholly self-funded programs and ran out of funds due to restrictive requirements such as high fees while no other crop requires licensure, background checks, or testing of crops; and #2 farmers want to grow a low-input, value-added crop such as hemp for its many uses yet at the same time do not want to appear to rock the boat with local, county or state officials. If hemp acres do not improve over time by lowering the license fees it is recommended the program transition, so farmers directly submit information to the Farm Service Agency, eliminating duplication of reporting.

With respect to hemp grain and seed alone, astronomical opportunities await Kansas farmers and suppliers. According to the 2021 publication, [A Review of Hemp as Food and Nutritional Supplement](#), "Hemp use in the food and supplement industry is predicted to expand in the coming years as demand grows, with enormous social, economic, and sanitary implications." It was found in *Hempseed as a nutritional resource: An overview* that, "Recent clinical trials have identified hempseed oil as a functional food, and animal feeding studies demonstrate the long-standing utility of hempseed as an important food resource." Finally it has been [said](#), "Industrial hemp is an exciting alternative in a landscape where we traditionally grow a limited number of crops, where it provides an opportunity to widen our agribiodiversity."

Currently ten states have amended their feed laws to include hemp seed as an ingredient based on federally approved [criteria](#). The intent behind such changes is to encourage healthy, sustainable options so states can harness hemp. We hope you join us in hemp's expansion and can offer any information that may help.

Thank you,

- Kelly Rippel

Co-Founder, Kansans for Hemp

Founding President, Planted Association of Kansas