

**House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources
Testimony in support of HB 2437**

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

Chair Rahjes and members of the House Agriculture Committee:

I thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today in support of House Bill 2437 as introduced. My name is Vanessa Cowie and I am the Executive Director of The Prairie Paws Animal Shelter. I also serve as the Chair for the Midwest Alliance for Animals, an alliance that serves to advocate and educate on best practice legislation, ensuring companion animals in our state are treated the way Kansans expect them to be. All of our member organizations are at least partially funded with taxpayer dollars, so fiscal responsibility is also a focus of our work.

I believe this bill, if passed, will make necessary and overdue updates to the Kansas Pet Animal Act, which is the single most important piece of legislature for Kansas Animal Shelters. As a leader in this industry, I have worked in partnership with the Animal Facilities Inspection program for the last 9 years. In my experience, the program has seen many advancements in that time, despite being limited by the deficiencies of the Pet Animal Act. Through these advancements, the AFI program has identified language that is impeding its ability to serve its function. While Kansas animal shelters will continue to battle for higher standards of care for companion animals, the updates outlined in this bill are a practical compromise that we support. Historically it has been rare for licensees to agree with the authority tasked with inspecting them, and the committee should place importance on this now being the case. Licensees speaking in opposition of this bill, may represent entities that this language has been written to address. In summary; this bill supports the efforts of the AFI to perform its function, without placing undue burden on the vast majority of licensees. An effective inspection program is in the best interest of our state, and our organizations are supportive of this approach.

On behalf of Prairie Paws Animal Shelter and the Midwest Alliance for Animals I ask you to support HB2437.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Cowie
Executive Director - Prairie Paws Animal Shelter
Chair - Midwest Alliance for Animals