

**Date: February 6, 2024**

**Re: HB 2564- Written Proponent**

**To: House Agriculture and Natural Resources, Chairman Rahjes**

**From: Claudia Hissong, Kansas Farm Bureau**

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Chairman Rahjes and members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on HB 2564. My name is Claudia Hissong, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) members. 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.

HB 2564 addresses two issues that Kansas Farm Bureau has focused on in recent years: local food systems and ending hunger in Kansas. Kansas Farm Bureau purchased Shop Kansas Farms in 2022. Shop Kansas Farms was designed as a platform for consumers to connect with local food producers. Kansas producers offer an array of goods, and this effort increases awareness and accessibility of the direct-to-consumer market. In 2020 Kansas Farm Bureau launched the End Hunger program. This program is a collaboration between county Farm Bureaus and Farm Bureau Financial Services to address food insecurity in Kansas with local solutions.

The farm-to-food bank program would acquire Kansas agricultural food products to be distributed through local food banks. This program would establish additional opportunities for Kansas producers to market their goods while addressing food insecurity in Kansas. With the assistance of the Kansas Department of Agriculture, growers and food banks can connect and negotiate purchase agreements that are beneficial to both entities. The Kansas agriculture industry and local communities will greatly benefit from the establishment of these relationships to deliver healthy, Kansas grown food options to those who need them, and creating new marketing opportunities for producers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2564. HB 2564 contains provisions that will address food insecurity while also supporting Kansas food producers, and we ask for your support of this program.