

2/5/2025

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development,

It is likely that this written testimony will not be submitted by the noon cut-off, as you see I am a full-time educator on top of a small business owner and beekeeper. This is not an unusual situation for beekeepers in the state of Kansas. There are not many beekeeping operations scaled over the hobbyist level, none that I can think of in the western half of the state.

This backyard hobby turned into a business essentially because I am a people pleaser. It was hard to tell people that I didn't have any honey to sell them, so I split hives and grew my backyard hobby into a small business- Four and Thirty Farms in Lakin, Kearny County, KS. When other small businesses ask if they could stock my honey in their shops I have to say no.

It is difficult to produce a good yield in the western half of the state, so the costs of renting a kitchen space, inspection and license fees are not feasible for the scale of my operation. It is also difficult to locate a shared certified kitchen in my area that would allow me to serve these small businesses and their customer base. This is a clear barrier to not only me, but the small local retailers who would like to carry a product like local honey. They are asking me, because their customers are asking them; there is a strong demand for local honey.

We have a clear case study on how unburdening small scale operations can help grow rural economies with our neighbors in Missouri. It would make local honey more accessible and allow small retailers in the area to offer an item that is truly unique and by its nature is safe.

I urge you to support HB2158, as it supports a network of small businesses that help make our Kansas communities great.

Thank you for considering this testimony. I am always happy to talk bees, but would be even happier to share any further details or additional insights if they would be helpful.

Sincerely,

Jade Like
Senate District 39 & House District 122