

RE: HOUSE BILL No. 2099

Regarding the creation of the Kansas Goat Council

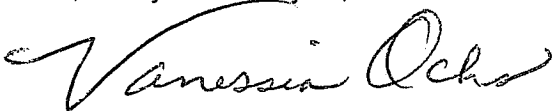
Hearing on February 8, 2011 @ 9:00 a.m., Docking State Office Bldg, Room 783

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee:

I am Vanessa Ochs, owner & sole proprietor of the Double O Ranch in Franklin County. I strongly oppose this bill for a number of reasons, and appreciate the opportunity to appear before this board today to discuss some of them with you.

- 1) Taxpayers in Kansas, not just those of us raising goats, don't need more government – in fact, we need less, by far. I believe a strong message was sent by voters in the November 2010 elections and we are depending upon our elected officials to scale back the size of government, at every level, beginning now.
- 2) The Kansas Meat Goat Association is an association in name only. With only 22 current members, this organization in no way represents the majority interests of meat goat producers in the state of Kansas. For over a year, KMGA has not been able to get enough members to attend a meeting to have a quorum and conduct it's own business. Per Section 1 (a) (1) of the bill, if the KMGA Board of Directors become the interim council members, they will likely remain so, because no one else belongs to KMGA; they do not represent a significant number of goat producers in the state.
- 3) If this were a "voluntary" check off, why would money be collected at the time of sale and only refunded as much as one year afterward? If it's truly voluntary, one should be able to "opt out" altogether. Otherwise, the council has the use of the producers' money all year, interest free. Fines, penalties, prosecution and possible imprisonment are threatened for noncompliance – how is that "voluntary"?
- 4) Section (6) (b) (2) says the council shall have the duty, power and authority to "find new markets for goats and their meat products". . . we need to hope they don't. US producers cannot begin to supply enough to meet the current demand. In 2007, the United States imported almost 23 million pounds of goat meat from Australia, New Zealand and Mexico – countries where, incidentally, there is no USDA inspection of animals brought to slaughter and no goat check off fees.
- 5) Section (6) (b) (3) says the council will be able "to accept grants and donations". Does that mean individual farms or breeder groups will be competing with the council for those funds, should they choose to pursue them?

There is no clearly stated purpose or objective for the Kansas Meat Goat Council. This appears to simply be a move toward more government, more bureaucracy, and more profit out of the pockets of individuals who do the hard work of raising livestock. In my opinion, a few breeders who are, perhaps, too lazy or disingenuous to market their own animals are looking to the rest of us to do that for them. It is a bad piece of legislation and needs to die here, today. Thank you,



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House Ag & Natural Resources
February 8, 2011
Attachment 6