

SESSION OF 2017

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE BILL NO. 117

As Amended by Senate Committee on
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Brief*

SB 117, as amended, would amend a section of the Noxious Weed Law that permits the board of county commissioners of any county to declare a plant to be a noxious weed within the boundaries of the county. The bill would add the everbearing blackberry and the Himalayan blackberry to the list of county-option noxious weeds.

Background

The bill was introduced at the request of a spokesperson from the Kansas Livestock Association (KLA). In the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources hearing, a spokesperson from KLA explained the wild blackberry is an example of an invasive plant that causes economic and ecological concerns in some parts of the state. The spokesperson stated this plant was of particular concern in the tallgrass prairie region of the state and it warranted the county-option designation. Written-only testimony in support of the bill was provided by a district extension director from the Flint Hills region and from a rancher from Strong City. Written-only testimony in opposition to the bill was provided by the President of the County Weed Director's Association of Kansas (Association). This testimony indicated the Association did not believe the wild blackberry met the definition of being an invasive species that, if left uncontrolled, would cause severe economic impact to agriculture. This testimony indicated the bill would be contrary

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

to other legislation being considered by the Legislature that would place responsibility of designation of noxious weeds with the Secretary of Agriculture rather than by the Legislature.

The Senate Committee amended the bill by deleting the reference to the more generic wild blackberry and replacing it with the everbearing blackberry and the Himalayan blackberry.

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the original bill, the Kansas Department of Agriculture and the Kansas Association of Counties state enactment of the bill would have no fiscal impact.