

1515 E. 30th Avenue
Hutchinson, KS 67502
www.kansasco-op.coop



Phone: 785-233-4085
Toll Free: 888-603-2667

Date: February 22, 2021
To: Representative Sean Tarwater, Chairman
House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee
From: Shahira Stafford, Kansas Cooperative Council
RE: Proponent Testimony on House Bill 2351

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Kansas Cooperative Council (KCC), thank you for the opportunity to support House Bill 2351. The KCC is a statewide association that works on behalf of all types of cooperatively structured businesses in Kansas. The industries organized as cooperatives are vast, including agriculture, utility, financial and insurance.

Our agricultural cooperatives often have grain, agronomy, precision ag, seed, feed, fuel, and financing operations. Jobs in these fields are vast, good-paying, and in demand. High school work-based programs are one way to expose students to the wide variety of careers available in the agribusiness space.

Agricultural cooperatives are ready to invest in vocational and technical training programs. However, many of our members are concerned about liability protection for their high school apprentices. HB 2351 would address this by extending the school district's liability insurance to cover enrolled students participating in such work-based learning.

Lack of a skilled workforce is a top inhibitor to growth and expansion for many of our cooperatives and continues to be a primary concern of industry leaders. Employment in the agriculture industry is a key component to strengthening the Kansas economy; and we believe that this bill would lessen some barriers in recruiting and training the next generation of agribusiness men and women.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to comment on HB 2351, and we respectfully ask for your support.