

Chairman Peck and Committee Members,

I'm writing in favor of House Bill 2168, which would make it less expensive and easier for more farmers in Kansas to grow industrial hemp. Hemp does not compete directly with traditional grains, and we've known since the February 1938 Popular Mechanics article titled "Hemp – Billion-Dollar Crop" that it has literally tens of thousands of different uses. According to a recent report by The Business Research Company, the market for hemp fiber is expected to grow to \$50 billion by 2028.

It seems like economic and common sense that the state of Kansas should make it easier for farmers to grow this valuable and versatile crop. There are many more potential markets for hemp than for wheat, corn or soybeans. Input prices for grains have risen sharply the last several years, while grain prices haven't gone up at the same rate. Simple math and economics tells us that if these trends continue, they are not sustainable. And with our federal government at \$34 trillion in debt - and increasing that number by \$1 trillion every 100 days - we should realize that farmers shouldn't continue to rely on federal subsidies in the future.

Foreign and domestic demand for wheat and corn have topped out, Russia is the largest exporter of wheat and Brazil is now the largest exporter of corn in the world. I don't see foreign countries buying more American grain when they have these other options, and farmers can't depend on trade to put a floor under grain prices. And a growing number of American consumers want to limit or eliminate the amount of grain in their diets. In my opinion, these trends are irreversible and won't come back to previous levels in our lifetimes.

Making it more difficult for farmers to grow hemp will not help wheat, corn and soybean growers become more profitable. Kansas farmers deserve fewer regulations and lower licensing fees, for greater agricultural freedom and an opportunity to be more profitable. HB 2168 is a common-sense bill, and I urge the Senate to pass it as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Brian Ochsner