

Testimony in Opposition to SB379

February 19, 2012

Phillip A. Vaughn
22748 Honey Creek Road
Tonganoxie, Kansas 66086.

To the Distinguished members of the House and Senate of the State of Kansas:

My name is Phillip Vaughn. I'm the owner of Honey Creek Vineyard. My family consists of my wife and four children, ages 5 through 11. I graduated from the University of Kansas in 2010 with a degree in anthropology and a minor in geography. After starting a masters and finishing 6 hours of graduate level classes, I decided to take a break from the academic world and instead turn my attention to building a vineyard.

When I decided to build a vineyard, I felt I was in a state that really cared about beginning vineyard/winery entrepreneurs and that the Kansas farm wine industry was a place I could hang my hat, start a business of my own, and leave behind something for my children to foster and build upon.

If HB2625, SB390, and SB379 pass, my concern is that I will be forced to sell my grapes for less as a result of losing the 60% requirement of Kansas grapes in Kansas wine. I ask you: What is wrong with requiring 60% Kansas grapes in Kansas wine? I say, let the investors, the State of Kansas, and the grape growers invest their capital in Kansas grapes, not in grapes

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grown somewhere else that are then trucked into Kansas. If these bills pass, the wineries will lose their connection with Agriculture. They will lose their right to self-distribute, the industry will lose their tasting rooms, and the state will lose money on tax dollars as a result of the tourism the wineries generate. If we lose our 60% requirement, everyone loses: The grape farmers, the wineries, and the State of Kansas.

If the original intent of the farm winery law was to increase the acreage of specialty crops, namely grapes, then revisit the incentives for beginning and existing grape growers and vintners in the state of Kansas. **Do not** make growers like me struggle even more to make a living wage. As it stands for me, I have earned \$00.00 in income for the last three years and the business has required more than \$10k to date in capital for root stock, fuel, hardware, fertilizers, pesticides, equipment purchases, posts, etc. The estimates above also include *grafted* root stock for apple, pear, peach, cherry, plum, raspberries, blackberries, as well as several varieties of blueberries.

I knew when I started that it is generally a period of five years before a return on your investment begins to be realized. Do not make it even harder for me to stay in business. Vote no on SB379.

Respectfully,

Phil Vaughn