

Chairman Hoffman and members of the House Agriculture Committee,

My name is Kerry Holton, and I've been a lifelong farmer in southern Leavenworth County.

Senate Bill 405, if made into law, will allow large corporate agricultural processing corporations to make an adverse impact on the constituents who sent you to Topeka to represent them. Both the house and senate members are elected by their constituents and asked to represent and protect Kansans in Topeka.

The state needs to leave the rules as they are and allow local communities and counties to decide what sort of industry they want.

Large corporate agricultural processing facilities have a place in Kansas, but, when they are inappropriately located, the harm done to communities can be devastating and permanent. Courts have ruled that there is an adverse effect on property values when certain businesses, such as corporate poultry industries, are located. The heavier the population base, the closer they are to major metropolitan areas and the larger the total footprint of the corporate poultry industries, the more significant the adverse impact becomes.

When a large corporate agricultural business moves in, it adversely impacts individuals who have already made large investments in their homes, farms and businesses. They, in many cases may have invested everything they have in their home. A poorly positioned animal processing or growing facility, as being discussed today, can destroy market value of nearby properties overnight. Homeowners and business owners may be stuck with properties they can't sell. Properties that are suddenly worth less than what they owe on them; they're stuck. When and if will their property taxes go down, on this house — or business — that is plunging in value. The multi-billion dollar corporation doesn't care.

But Kansans have elected house and senate members who are supposed represent the interests of their constituents. If Senate Bill 405 becomes law, the citizens will have no say in whether or not big poultry moves into their neighborhoods.

Regarding jobs, the majority of jobs these corporations bring into a community provide a poverty-level wage and working conditions that are hazardous to the health and human safety of the workers.

Senator Holland and Representative Karleskint have proposed legislation that would allow local communities to assess the fit of certain businesses and prevent those that didn't fit from entering. This is a good bipartisan idea that would benefit every county in Kansas.

Regarding revenue that large poultry processing facilities will pay Kansas farmers for grain, it would be understandable that the corporations would want to pay the lowest possible price for grain; which may not benefit the farmers after all.

Large agricultural processing facilities demand local communities to provide inexpensive and oftentimes tax-exempt financing and a long-duration property tax abatement. This weighs

heavily on local communities and counties that bear the burden of funding needed infrastructure — such as roads, bridges, fire protection, law enforcement — for these facilities.

In addition, where is the tax abatement for the growers, who build millions of dollars worth of single-purpose buildings that are good for nothing but raising chickens? Without the growers, there is no slaughterhouse; this should be a package deal that benefits Kansas farmers.

The enhanced profits that these subsidies provide these multi-billion dollar corporations do not stay in the local communities. The major shareholders of these corporations are the benefactors of these local subsidies that enhance the corporation and devastate the community and environment.

These facilities can and do **permanently** drive the kind of future development that will occur once they have entered a community. **Clean businesses**, whether they be commercial or light industry, will hesitate to invest new dollars in locations near these large slaughterhouses and growing facilities. This would effect the value of the capital they invest and their ability to attract and retain the quality workforce they want and need. At that stage, only equally offensive corporations will be attracted to locate near this kind of industry. Once that occurs, the spiral is headed down at an even faster rate.

On behalf of Kansans across the state, I urge you to support Representative Karleskint and Senator Holland in their efforts effort for transparency and community choice. In addition, please vote NO for Senate Bill 405.

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