

Kansas Agricultural Aviation Association

HB2702 – Proponent – February 14, 2018

House Energy, Utilities, and Telecommunications Committee

Chairman Seiwert and members of the Committee,

The Kansas Agricultural Aviation Association stands in full support of HB2702 and KDOT's efforts to comply with NTSB requirements and ensure the safety of our members as they operate in support of Kansas agriculture. Our aerial applicators, along with medical, search and rescue, firefighting, and law enforcement aircraft operate in areas at low levels that make awareness of obstacles vital. HB2702 addresses that need for knowledge of potential hazards.

HB2702 takes the logical step of implementing a KDOT database of MET towers and leveraging new technology to cost-effectively and efficiently create a GIS/GPS safety net for the users of low-level airspace.

The National Agricultural Aviation Association has implemented a safety training and awareness program in the past few years targeting both new and veteran applicators. We, as an industry, have successfully lowered the numbers of accidents and losses, but recognize the need to be innovative and proactive in addressing key areas. One of those key areas is the proliferation of towers under the minimum height to be FAA regulated. These towers are often of narrow profile, guy-wired, and erected quickly. These factors create a hazard that is of limited visibility and unexpected – even (or especially) by those long familiar with the area.

A Kansas applicator spraying for brush and invasive noxious weeds in Anderson County pastures shared a too common experience. Turning as he finished a swath across a pasture, he narrowly avoided a collision with a tower. The tower had not been there a few days before as he sprayed a neighboring pasture and the landowner had not given him a warning because they too were unaware of the new structure.

As HB2702 only amends current law that already requires physical marking with the addition of registering location and height of structures, we feel this is a common-sense approach to enhance safety in our state. Thank you.

Steve Hitchcock – Government Affairs

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