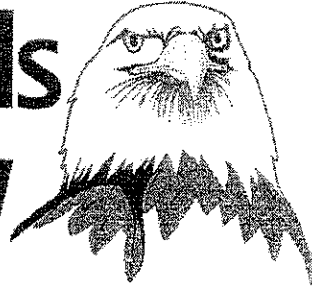


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February 9, 2018

Senate Agricultural & Natural Resources Committee
Kansas Legislature
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: Testimony to the Senate Agricultural & Natural Resource Committee for the Hearing on SB 405

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony to the Senate Agricultural & Natural Resource Committee for the Hearing on SB 405, an act concerning the department of health and environment; relating to animal conversion units; poultry facilities; amending K.S.A. 2017 Supp. 65-171d and repealing the existing section.

I represent the Friends of the Kaw, Inc., a 501(c)(3), grassroots, conservation organization, the mission of which is to protect and preserve the Kansas River (locally known as the Kaw) for present and future generations. I am also an active member of the Kansas Basin Regional Advisory Committee for the Kansas Water Plan and Vision, which involves the efforts of many people across Kansas to address the water problems of our state.

The Kansas River is a 53,000 square mile watershed that extends from eastern Colorado, central Nebraska and almost the entire upper half of Kansas. That is 53,000 square miles of potential pollution, both non-point source and point sources, that makes its way into the Kansas River, which is a drinking water source for over 800,000 Kansans.

We oppose SB 405. This bill will allow 11 barns with up to 333,000 chickens to be placed at a single location. This is more than three times the existing rule of 100,000 chickens, and stay within a quarter mile (1320 ft.) setback. That's three times more manure and air pollution, which will make its way into our rivers and streams. Each barn holds ~25,000 chickens (broilers). At those numbers, these are more like cities than farms. And that waste has to go somewhere. This bill means that a contractor with four barns does not need a federal permit which equates to more pollution of our streams, including the Kansas River. All of that waste has the potential to pollute our drinking water every time it rains and the waste and pollution from this facility will impact everyone downstream, all the way to Kansas City. That is how watersheds work – if you are downstream, you get the pollution.



Chicken waste has to be composted. It is very high in nitrogen and cannot be spread on fields as fertilizer until it sits and composts for a period of time. While it sits, rain will wash some manure (with nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorous) into our rivers and streams. High nutrients create many problems, such as excessive blue-green algal (cyanobacterial) growth, like what is found in Milford Reservoir year after year. Allowing more dense animal operations through bills like SB 405 would likely exacerbate water quality issues, on par with those we see in Milford Reservoir, across the state.

Non-point source pollution is one of the greatest challenges to maintaining water quality within the Kansas River Watershed. Allowing three times as many chickens to be housed in more concentrated feeding operations would make our job of protecting the Kansas River much more difficult. So this decision will impact the entire state and everyone downstream. We already have tough water problems to solve, including these excessive nutrients in Milford Reservoir, why would we want to complicate things even more with a rule such as this?

SB 405 is irresponsible given the difficult water problems we are currently struggling to solve.

This is not just about chicken houses, it is also about people's drinking water, where they recreate, fishing, and even the home values for the people of Wakefield, Kansas that deal with the impacts of nutrient loading into their beautiful lake every day.

We respectfully request that you oppose SB 405 for the health of Kansas.

Sincerely,
FRIENDS OF THE KAW



Dawn Buehler
Kansas Riverkeeper

KANSAS RIVERKEEPER®

