



March 10, 2022

Testimony in Opposition to SB 501 Senate Public Health & Welfare

Chair Hilderbrand and Members of the Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee:

The Kansas Food and Farm Coalition (FFC) would like to express its opposition to SB 501. Kansas FFC is a group of long-standing nonprofit organizations concerned about our food system—from farm to fork. Coalition members include KC Healthy Kids, the Kansas Food Action Network, the Kansas Rural Center, and Harvesters—The Community Food Network. (The attached one-pager provides more information about FFC). Our coalition works to support policies that assist small and mid-sized farms, increase production and sales of locally grown foods, increase access to healthy food for all, and reduce food insecurity in our communities. SB 501 directly challenges these goals, particularly when it comes to increasing access to food for some of our most vulnerable Kansans.

As a coalition concerned with issues impacting both consumers and producers, SB 501 directly challenges a couple of our policy priorities, namely, increasing SNAP enrollment among eligible individuals and families. Additionally, increasing participation in SNAP positively impacts our farmers, grocers, and overall food system. For example, farmers and ranchers receive 15 cents of every dollar spent on food and Kansas grocers benefit from SNAP customers. Further, as Kansas families continue recovering from the economic impacts of the pandemic, as well as confront the rising costs of food and other necessities, now is not the time to add barriers to obtaining food, especially for the most vulnerable and low-income Kansans.

For these reasons we ask the committee not advance SB 501. The bill would burden Kansans who may be struggling to make ends meet, having trouble finding a job, or are facing hardship for any number of reasons. We stand ready to work with the Legislature to increase access to healthy food for the Kansans that need it most. Thank you for your consideration and I welcome any questions you may have on this matter.

Stuart J. Little, Ph.D.
Little Government Relations
stuartjlittle@mac.com

The Kansas Food and Farm Coalition

The Kansas Food and Farm Coalition(FFC) is a group of long-standing Kansas nonprofit organizations concerned about our food system - from farm to fork. In recognition of how interwoven food system issues are, these organizations have come together to support policies that grow Kansas communities' local food systems. This includes policies that support small and mid-sized farms, increase production and sales of locally grown foods, increase access to healthy food for all, and improve food security in our communities.

Kansas Food and Farm Council 2022 Policy Agenda

- Eliminate the state sales tax on food.
- Increase SNAP enrollment among eligible individuals and families:
 - Remove the child support enforcement requirement for SNAP.
 - Remove the restriction on the SNAP time limit waiver for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD waiver).
 - Remove the ban on SNAP for drug felons.
- Support local food procurement and promotion. In particular:
 - Increase funding for and participation in the Kansas Department of Education Farm to School Program.
 - Identify opportunities to build upon the USDA Farm to Food Bank program with state support.

Food and Farm Coalition Partner Organizations and Contact Information:

 <p><u>KC Healthy Kids:</u> KC Healthy Kids was established in 2005 to advance the health and well-being of children and families through community-driven initiatives and advocacy where they live, learn, work and play. Contact: Beth Low-Smith blsmith@kchealthykids.org</p>	<p>Kansas Food Action Network <u>Kansas Food Action Network:</u> Composed of over 30 local food, farm and policy councils, the Kansas Food Action Network is a statewide advocacy network focused on building resilient local and state food systems in Kansas. Contact: Miranda Miller-Klugesherz- mklugesherz@kchealthykids.org</p>
 <p><u>Kansas Rural Center:</u> KRC is led by Kansans who strive to help each other and their rural or urban communities grow a healthy food and farming system. We envision a future of thriving family farms, revitalized communities, a clean environment, a healthy local and regional food system, and viable livelihoods for farmers,</p>	 <p><u>Harvesters-The Community Food Network:</u> Harvesters is the regional food bank serving a <u>26-county area</u> in northwest MO and northeast KS. In FY21, Harvesters provided more than 77 million pounds of</p>

including opportunities for the next generation growing our food. Contact: Tom Buller - tom@kansasruralcenter.org

food to more than 760 nonprofit agencies serving the hungry and food insecure. Contact: Karen Siebert- ksiebert@harvesters.org

** Lobbyist Representation: Little Government Relations. Contact: Stuart Little or Mallory Lutz: stuartjlittle@mac.com, lutzmallory@gmail.com **