

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dan Johnson at 3:30 p.m. on March 2, 2005, in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative John Faber - excused
Representative Harold Lane - excused
Representative Bruce Larkin - excused
Representative Bill Light - excused

Committee staff present:

Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Gordon Self, Revisor of Statutes Office
Kay Scarlett, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Steven Bittel, Executive Director, Kansas Rural Development Council
Constantine Cotsoradis, Assistant Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture

Others attending:

See attached list.

Minutes of the February 9, 14, and 16 meetings were distributed. Members were asked to notify the committee secretary of any corrections or additions prior to Friday, March 4, or the minutes will be considered approved as presented.

Chairman Johnson reported that he had been contacted by a delegation from Taiwan requesting introduction of a resolution in support of a Taiwan-United States Free Trade Agreement. He stated that this committee will introduce such a resolution if there are no objections. Seeing none, it was so ordered.

Steven Bittel, Executive Director, Kansas Rural Development Council, presented his report, *Kansas Crossroads: The Future of Rail Freight Movement in Rural Kansas*, published in May, 2004. He discussed the loss of rail service and its economic impact on rural communities. A copy of the report can be obtained from Mr. Bittel at the Kansas Rural Development Council in Topeka or at www.ksrhc.org

Hearing on SB 113 - Raises the registration fees for soil amendment products

Chairman Johnson opened the hearing on **SB 113**. Raney Gilliland explained that **SB 113** would increase the maximum registration fee to register a soil amendment product with the Kansas Department of Agriculture from \$60 to \$100 per product, and delete the sunset provision in current law which would have expired on June 30, 2010. The bill would also repeal a section of law (Attachment 1) which permits the Kansas Department of Agriculture to charge an inspection fee based on the tonnage of soil amendment products sold in the state and requires that registrants report to the agency tonnage distributed by county.

Constantine Cotsoradis, Assistant Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture, appeared in support of **SB 113** to streamline the reporting requirements in the Soil Amendment Act. He explained that before a soil amendment can be sold, the company registering it for use in Kansas must prove that it works in the way they claim that it does. He reported that currently there are 12 firms with 15 products registered in Kansas and they are required to report tonnage twice a year even if they did not have any sales during the reporting period. He stated that elimination of the reporting requirement and tonnage fees will benefit both industry and their pesticide and fertilizer program. To offset lost tonnage fees, this legislation would increase the registration fee for soil amendment products from \$60 to \$100 per product. (Attachment 2)

There being no other conferees, the hearing on **SB 113** was closed. Staff noted that a technical amendment would be necessary when the bill is worked.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House Agriculture Committee at 3:30 p.m. on March 2, 2005, in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

Hearing and action on SB 219 - Creating the pest control compact

Chairman Johnson opened the hearing on **SB 219**. Raney Gilliland explained that **SB 219** would enact the Pest Control Compact which is a multi-state effort to allow individual states to obtain financial support to control plant pests in a cooperative manner. Kansas is already a member of the compact; however, that language which had authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into the compact (Attachment 3) was inadvertently repealed in 2002.

Constantine Cotsoradis, Assistant Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture, testified in support of **SB 219**. He explained that adoption of the model language from the Interstate Pest Control Compact is necessary for Kansas to retain its voting privileges. The state is currently a dues-paying member with full voting rights, but could lose the right to vote if the model language is not adopted in statute. Being a voting member means the state will be able to participate fully in the compact and help ensure that we receive the assistance we may need in the future. (Attachment 4)

Mr. Cotsoradis and Tom Sim, Plant Protection and Weed Control Program Manager, answered committee questions. It was learned that the State of Kansas has already paid approximately \$28,000 in membership dues and that thirty-five states currently belong to the compact.

As there were no other conferees, the Chairman closed the hearing on **SB 219** and opened the floor for discussion.

Representative Svaty moved to recommend SB 219 favorable for passage and, because the bill is of a noncontroversial nature, be placed on the consent calendar. Seconded by Representative Miller, the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for March 7, 2005.