



## 2018 Legislative & Policy Watch Weekly E-Update

Issue No. 2

January 12, 2018

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### About Policy Watch E-Updates

The Legislative and Policy Watch Weekly E-Update is a project of the Kansas Rural Center.

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The Kansas Rural Center promotes the health of the land and its people through research, education and advocacy that advance an ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially just agriculture. For more information about KRC go to [www.kansasruralcenter.org](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org).



### Welcome to the second issue of KRC's Weekly Policy Watch Updates for 2018!

KRC and its co-sponsors will be offering weekly summaries of the Kansas State Legislature's activities including hearings, bills introduced, testimony, calendars, and background analysis on a range of issues including agriculture and food related topics, state budget (including education finance) and tax policies, energy and water policy, and social services issues. Paul Johnson, KRC's policy analyst, will monitor the Legislature and report on critical issues and provide you with timely information. KRC will also provide additional information on how to contact your legislator, additional resources available on key topics, and inform you of any opportunities to learn more about the legislative process or specific educational meetings on key topics.

KRC will also offer updates and information on the federal farm bill, courtesy of our membership in the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. The federal farm bill and its programs impact all aspects of agriculture and food related policies, rural economic development, and natural resource management.

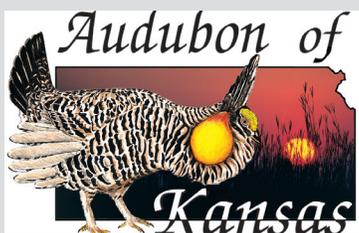
Special thanks to our co-sponsors this year: League of Women Voters of Kansas, Kansas Natural Resource Council, Kansas Farmers Union, Audubon of Kansas, and Climate and Energy Project. We hope to pick up one or two more as the session gets underway! If interested, please contact Mary Fund at [mfund@kansasruralcenter.org](mailto:mfund@kansasruralcenter.org).

*Mary Fund, Executive Director and Editor*

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The Kansas Natural Resource Council (KNRC) promotes environmentally responsible practices and sustainable natural resource policies to ensure the quality and abundance of these resources for future generations. For more information about our organization and programs, or how to become a member, please visit <http://www.knrc.ws/>.



Audubon of Kansas (AOK) is a statewide non-profit organization established to promote appreciation and stewardship of Kansas' natural ecosystems, with special emphasis on conservation of prairies, birds, other wildlife, and habitat. For more information about our organization and our programs, or how to become a member, please visit <http://www.audubonofkansas.org>.



Kansas Farmers Union is the state's oldest active farm organization working to protect and enhance the economic interests & quality of life for family farmers, ranchers & rural communities. For more information go to: [www.kansasfarmersunion.com](http://www.kansasfarmersunion.com).

## THE GOOD BYE/GOOD LUCK BUDGET

by Paul Johnson

Governor Sam Brownback continues as Governor waiting for his confirmation before the United States Senate to the post of ambassador for international religious freedom. Uncertainty exists over who is making the key decisions on budget and revenues. Lt. Governor Jeff Colyer waits in the wings while selecting key cabinet positions such as the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families. Governor Brownback gave his final State of the State address on Tuesday evening Jan. 9th. The Governor's budget was released on Wednesday. The Governor took the extra revenues from a tax increase he vetoed to increase spending on public education and shore up the staffing problems at prisons and state hospitals. He accomplished this again by draining ending balances and leaving Kansas in fiscal straights headed into 2020.

The Governor modified the budget in this fiscal year (that ends) June 30 by adding \$34.5 million in new spending. For Fiscal Year 2019 that starts July 1, 2018, the Governor increases spending by \$290 million. This 2019 budget is built off \$1.2 Billion in new tax revenues and continues to sweep \$400 million a year in sales tax from the State Highway Fund. There are no additional state employee raises beyond the 10% for correction employees. The Governor did not recommend \$20 million sought by the Judicial Branch for pay raises. The budget analysis developed by Kansas Legislative Research Department prior to the Governor's recommendations had an ending balance of \$356 million on June 30, 2019 but under the Governor's proposals, the ending balance falls to \$150 million and puts the state deeper in debt for 2020 and 2021.

In the Governor's State of the State, the only concrete budget number mentioned was a \$600 million increase to public schools over five years. The Governor proposed \$100 million a year but \$93 million in 2019 had already been passed so the total increase is \$517 million over five years. This increase will take Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) from \$4,281 in 2019 to \$4,761 by 2023. Roughly \$60 million of this annual \$100 million increase is the assumed Midwest consumer price index increase so it is just

## How to Contact Kansas Legislators

Kansas House of Representatives, [http://www.kslegislature.org/li\\_2014/b2013\\_14/chamber/house/roster/](http://www.kslegislature.org/li_2014/b2013_14/chamber/house/roster/).

Kansas Senate, [http://www.kslegislature.org/li\\_2014/b2013\\_14/chamber/senate/roster/](http://www.kslegislature.org/li_2014/b2013_14/chamber/senate/roster/).

For Kansas Legislature Committees, [http://kslegislature.org/li\\_2012/b2011\\_12/committees/](http://kslegislature.org/li_2012/b2011_12/committees/).

To identify your legislator, click [https://openstates.org/find\\_your\\_legislator/](https://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/).

## Policy Watch Sponsors



League of Women Voters of Kansas is a grassroots volunteer political organization with nine local chapters across Ks.. For nearly 100 years, LWVK has encouraged the informed and active participation of citizens in government. For more information, contact <http://lwvk.org/>.



Climate and Energy Project (CEP) is a Kansas-based non-partisan non-profit working to find practical solutions for a clean energy future. For More information go to: [www.climateandenergy.org](http://www.climateandenergy.org).

## GOODBYE/GOOD LUCK BUDGET, continued

\$40 million of new funds a year to account for a decade of underfunding. The Governor proposes higher salaries for schoolteachers compared to surrounding states with Kansas passing Missouri (Kansas \$47,775 versus Missouri \$47,900) in 2019 and passing the other states at the end of five years. The Governor's budget does not restore the 4% (\$27 million) cut to Higher Education last year.

The health-care portion of the budget will spend \$22 million in 2019 to restore the 4% cut to Medicaid and \$17.7 million to restore the 3% cut to nursing homes. There is \$8.5 million in new funds for expansion and improvement for care of children who have been removed from their homes and seeking adoption along with enhancements for child welfare and foster care programs. Twenty additional Child Welfare social workers will be hired along with investigative staff to find missing children. \$2.1 million is added to increase Family Preservation Funding. There is \$1 million in funding to eliminate the Parents-as-Teachers waiting list. Osawatomie State Hospital had 206 beds before the loss of federal certification. 60 beds have now been recertified and 90 more beds are waiting for recertification. \$7.4 million have added for this process.

There is still great uncertainty over the revenue picture. Lawmakers will not know until late April or May what exact amount of collections of income taxes will come from 'non-wage' income (LLC loophole). The new federal tax law may have more filers taking the higher standard deduction, which may prove beneficial to Kansas. Some filers are trying to move certain deductions into 2017 before the new tax law goes into affect in 2018 so Kansas may get extra payments. What is clear is that the Governor proposed the increased spending on education and social services with no proposal for a tax increase. The prayer and hope once again is that magical economic growth will miraculously bail out the fiscal picture for Kansas, as the Governor is long gone.

To view the Governor's budget: [budget.ks.gov](http://budget.ks.gov).

## SENATE AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE AGENDA

For the next few weeks, this Committee will be working on specific bills and holding informational hearings on topics of information. First up is SB 263 proposed by the Chairperson – Senator Dan Kerschen – to enact an alternative crop research act to study industrial hemp at certain State educational institutions under the supervision of the Kansas Department of Agriculture. Hearings will be held January 16 and 17.

Kansas has not had a comprehensive state water law review since 1957 so there is legislation to propose such a study. There will be legislation concerning poultry production litter control (known as the Tyson bill) and possibly changes in the siting distances for chicken houses from neighbors. Watershed districts have legislation to change law on conservation easements. Groundwater Management District #2 wants a change in water fee caps.

In terms of information topics, Kansas Forestry Service gave a presentation to the committee. Poultry production technology will be discussed in terms of odor control and water use. Wichita has requested time to discuss water policy. Kansas Secretary of Agriculture will give the annual report and discuss business development policy as it relates to recruiting agri-business interests to Kansas. There will be an update on the controversy over Dicamba and damages to neighboring soybean fields along with concern over 2-4D's impact on neighboring crops such as cotton. The commodity groups will make their annual reports as will KSU's Dean of Agriculture John Floros on Thursday January 18. There will be a presentation on soil health and hopefully one on the Beginning Farmer Loan Program located at the Kansas Development Finance Authority. Stay tuned for more on dates and times, or go to [www.kslegislature.org](http://www.kslegislature.org) for the Committee schedules.

## LEGISLATIVE LOGISTICS NOTES

The Kansas Legislature website is [www.kslegislature.org](http://www.kslegislature.org). The House and Senate Calendars are available on this site. On Thursdays, the two calendars list the committee meetings for the rest of the week but also list the committee meetings scheduled for the following week. Now these schedules are not written in stone and might well be changed but it is some indication of bills or topics that could be heard the next week.

The 2018 session is a continuation of the 2017 session, so bills introduced last year are still alive. There are now 276 Senate bills and 468 House bills. To track the latest bills filed, go to [www.kansaslegislature.org](http://www.kansaslegislature.org), click on 'Bills and Laws' at the top. Pick Senate or House. Click on the icon '>' to the right and it will take you to the final bills filed and numbered. You can view the latest bills that are listed by title. You can click on any specific bill and it will display the history of the bill and the bill itself under documents. For example, the industrial hemp bill is SB 263. HB 2445 - filed by Rep. Rooker - is intended to resolve the inequity issue in school finance as stated by the Kansas Supreme Court.

**Live streaming of Hearings.** Most of the key committee hearing rooms in the Capitol are now streaming live committee hearings over the internet. You need to select the committee and when you click on that committee, there is an icon to listen to the proceedings when the committee is in session. At the top of the Kansas Legislature website is the tab 'Audio/Video'. When the House or Senate are in full session, you can listen to and watch the action on the internet.

Below the listings for the House and Senate is 'Statehouse Live & Archive' which will show you what is planned for the day and list start times. The Archive portion has previous committee and interim committee proceedings stored. So for example to listen to the Special Committee on Natural Resources that spent two days discussing water law and the State Water Plan go the month of October 2017 and click on the 31st. The second day of hearings was on November 13. To read the filed testimony, click on the 'Committees' tab and select 'Special' committees where you will see the 2017 Special Committee on Natural Resources. If interested in an update on taxation and revenue issues, the 2017 Special Committee on Assessment and Taxation met on December 7 and December 8, 2017 to discuss the existing revenue picture and options for increasing revenues.

## FEDERAL FARM BILL

Last fall two important farm and food “marker” bills were introduced into Congress. A marker bill is a piece of legislation that is not intended to be voted on by Congress by itself but is used to “set the mark” and be included in a larger piece of legislation like the 2018 Farm Bill. While our Kansas Congressmen and woman may not be the most likely co-sponsors of these marker bills, letting them know we support the concepts and opportunities in these two bills can be critical to passage within the Farm bill. The two bills dealt with below are the Local Food and Regional Market Supply Act or the Local FARMS Act of 2017 (S.1947 and H.R. 3941) and the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act (H.R. 4316). Please see the below information from the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC).

### **The Local Food and Regional Market Supply Act (S. 1947 / H.R. 3941)**

The [Local Food and Regional Market Supply \(Local FARMS\) Act](#) of 2017, introduced on October 4, 2017 by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Representatives Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), and Sean Maloney (D-NY), will support the continued expansion of new market opportunities for American family farmers by:

- Helping farmers reach new markets through outreach, cost-share, and technical assistance programs
- Increasing access to fresh, healthy, local food among low-income groups and communities in need
- Developing new and strengthening existing infrastructure that connects producers to consumers

To learn more:

- [Download a one-page overview of the Local FARMS Act](#)
- [Download a policy summary of the Local FARMS Act](#)
- [Download a detailed outline of the Local FARMS Act](#)

For full story go to: <http://sustainableagriculture.net/our-work/campaigns/fbcampaign/localregional-food/local-farms-act/>.

### **The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act (H.R.4316)**

The [Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act of 2017 \(H.R.4316\)](#), introduced on November 8, 2017 by Representatives Tim Walz (D-MN) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) lays out a national strategy that will break down barriers to entry and give real support to the next generation of farmers by:

- Expanding beginning farmers’ access to affordable land.
- Empowering new and veteran farmers with the skills to succeed in today’s agricultural economy.
- Ensuring equitable access to financial capital and federal crop insurance.
- Encouraging commitment to conservation and stewardship across generations.

Nearly 100 million acres of farmland (enough to support nearly 250,000 family farms) is set to change hands over the next five years – during the course of our next farm bill. To keep our agricultural economy strong, the next farm bill needs to facilitate the transfer of skills, knowledge, and land between current and future generations of family farmers.

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act will ensure that this transfer takes place, and that our next farm bill paves the way for the future of American agriculture. The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) is dedicated to ensuring that our beginning, aspiring, and veteran farmers have all the tools and resources they need to succeed. NSAC therefore supports this bill’s inclusion in the 2018 Farm Bill.

- [Download a one-page overview of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act](#)
- [Download a policy summary of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act](#)
- [Download a detailed outline of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Opportunity Act](#)

For more go to: <http://sustainableagriculture.net/our-work/campaigns/fbcampaign/beginning-farmers-and-ranchers/beginning-farmer-rancher-opportunity-act-2017/>.

## About Policy Watch and Sponsors

Contributors to KRC are automatically on the Policy Watch list, if they provide an e-mail address; or you can subscribe just for the Updates for \$25. KRC will send complimentary copies to non-contributors for several issues upon request. To get information on how to support Policy Watch, contact Mary Fund at 866-579-5469 or [mfund@kansasruralcenter.org](mailto:mfund@kansasruralcenter.org).

In 2018, KRC is partnering with the Kansas Natural Resource Council (KNRC), Audubon of Kansas (AOK), Kansas Farmers Union (KFU), League of Women Voters of Kansas (LWVK), and Climate and Energy Policy (CEP) to send Policy Watch to their members. We thank them for their support.

To opt out of receiving Policy Watch as a member of one of these organizations see the following.

- If you are receiving Policy Watch because you are an Audubon of Kansas member or want more information about AOK, or to be removed you need to contact Ron Klataske at [ron\\_klataske@audubonofkansas.org](mailto:ron_klataske@audubonofkansas.org).
- If a member of KNRC, contact Joanna Voigt at [jvoigt@kansasruralcenter.org](mailto:jvoigt@kansasruralcenter.org).
- If a member of KFU contact Mercedes Taylor-Puckett at [kfu.mercedes@gmail.com](mailto:kfu.mercedes@gmail.com).
- If a member LWVK, contact [lww.kansas@gmail.com](mailto:lww.kansas@gmail.com).

If you have any questions about Policy Watch, contact Mary Fund, editor, at [mfund@kansasruralcenter.org](mailto:mfund@kansasruralcenter.org), or contact Paul Johnson at [pdjohnson@centurylink.net](mailto:pdjohnson@centurylink.net).

To learn more about the Kansas Rural Center, please visit our website at [www.kansasruralcenter.org](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org).

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