



2018 Legislative & Policy Watch Weekly E-Update

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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.



CORPORATE CHICKEN WELCOME MAT

by Paul Johnson

State officials, certain State lawmakers and the agri-business farm organizations have lobbied the corporate chicken welcome mat through the Kansas House and towards the Governor's desk with no amendments to Senate Bill 405. The bill passed the Kansas House today.

The same crowd that pushed Kansas into fiscal insolvency comparable to Mississippi or Arkansas now wants to promote indentured servitude agriculture through complete State control over local units of government. This same crowd that lambasted federal overreach in environmental programs by the EPA is quite comfortable with the State having unchecked power over counties. This political process to promote corporate poultry was expedited to limit a meaningful debate on the social, environmental and public safety impacts on local communities as experienced in so many other states.

In the one hearing in the Kansas House Agriculture Committee, the proponents were given unlimited time to whitewash the perfection of industrial poultry while the opponents were shut out to the last minute before an exhausted, tired committee. The Tuesday March 6 hearing started at 3:30. Proponents had unchecked time and unlimited questions till 4:45. The opponents were time controlled and hustled through in 30 minutes with no questions from the committee.

Normally issues of such importance would be given two days of hearings with proponents the first day and opponents the second day. Normally there would be a few days to comprehend the testimony before debating a bill for passage. For corporate chicken, the committee debate was set for the next day – Wednesday - with little time for amendments. SB 405 was quickly voted out of committee and rushed to the House floor for a Friday debate.

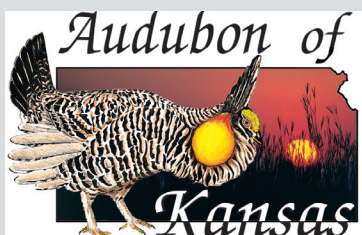
The whitewash of corporate poultry was well orchestrated. K-State Extension poultry experts explained the perfection of industrial poultry 2.0 that has no odor or flies. There was scant

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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.

CORPORATE CHICKEN WELCOME MAT

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discussion of handling the thousands of dead birds or disposing of the massive tonnage of chicken litter. No KSU experts were invited to discuss the poverty wages of most chicken growers, or the hazards of poultry plant injuries from cutting up thousands of chickens an hour.

In passing, there was slight mention of the fact that chicken litter must be incorporated into the soil to avoid run-off but no recognition that this does not work as well with expanding no-till farming practices. Kansas had close to 20 'harmful algal blooms' last year closing reservoirs like Milford and Marion. Chicken litter is high in nitrogen and phosphorous that will further contribute to the deterioration of water quality in Kansas.

At the Livestock Waste Management Section within the Kansas Department of Health & Environment, there are 10 employees in Topeka and 9 field employees to monitor and regulate over 3,000 confined animal feeding operations (CAFO's) statewide. No time was spent on whether or not this staffing is adequate for current CAFO's let alone any expansion into poultry.

Kansans eat chicken, and there is an expanding number of small independent poultry producers, but there are very few small meat plants that process live birds. There is no mega-commercial chicken broiler production today in Kansas while there is some commercial egg production. (To view factory farming in Kansas by county go to www.factoryfarmingmap.org for swine, cattle, dairy, and the one county with layers.)

There needs to be a better vision for humane, livable wage poultry production. A cooperative model could be developed where the growers and workers are actual owners of a poultry cooperative with regional processing plants across the state. Consumers are increasingly questioning intensive, industrial poultry production dependent on subservient farmers and impoverished immigrant labor, and of questionable environmental impact. A cooperative model would be a healthier system managed by the employee/owners and the profits would be kept in Kansas to invest in even more sustainable agriculture opportunities.

Ask your House representative how they voted on SB 405, and let them know your concerns. Calls or emails to the Governor, now that the bill is headed to his desk, are also important. While currently there are no known official plans for a processing/slaughterhouse in Kansas, SB 405 puts the welcome mat out for a concentrated industrial model of dubious benefit to the very people it is supposed to help – farmers and rural communities – and of dubious impact on water and air quality.

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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.

EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

The real debate over school funding begins on March 15 when a cost study by Dr. Lori Taylor will set a benchmark for funding. Politically, some Republicans are now insisting that there be one budget bill for K-12 funding and a budget bill for the rest of State government. The purpose is to isolate the public education community and frame the debate around education versus all other budgetary needs. All the while, the search for revenues continues.

The debate has started over raising the 20 mill statewide public education levy. The House Tax Committee has forwarded a bill to apply the Kansas sales tax to most purchases over the Internet to Kansas addresses. The revenue estimates are questionable in the \$70 to \$130 million range. The revenue picture will be clarified in mid-April when the Consensus Revenue Estimators meet to establish revenue projections for the next 30 months. This projection will be the basis for finalizing the Fiscal Year 2019 budget that runs from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

Being an election year, politicians are targeting a \$200 million increase for public schools in 2019 with the belief the Kansas Supreme Court will accept that down payment if \$200 million is also proposed for 2020 and 2021. With some luck, the 2019 budget can handle the \$200 million without new taxes and the newly elected 2019 Kansas lawmakers will be handed the revenue shortfalls for 2020 and 2021.

On the policy front, the Kansas House passed a restoration of K-12 teacher due process rights that were eliminated a few years ago. An independent party will determine whether a teacher with three years of employment can be denied a contract. The House also forwarded a measure to require school districts to post on their internet sites the district policies against bullying and cyberbullying of students. University students have now petitioned the Kansas Supreme Court to intervene in the K-12 school funding case. These students are concerned over the decrease of State support for higher education by 30% that has resulted in increasing tuitions and fewer professors. The Kansas Constitution states there should be 'suitable provision for finance of the educational interests of the State'. K-12 funding is just one part of educational interests in Kansas.

How to Contact Kansas Legislators

Kansas House of Representatives,

http://www.kslegislature.org/li_2014/b2013_14/chamber/house/roster/.

Kansas Senate, http://www.kslegislature.org/li_2014/b2013_14/chamber/senate/roster/.

For Kansas Legislature Committees, http://kslegislature.org/li_2012/b2011_12/committees/.

To identify your legislator, click https://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/.

RENEWABLE ENERGY EXPANSION

Kansas is one of 14 states in the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) that runs from North Dakota down to Arkansas. The SPP handles the transmission grid that moves power from 95 companies within the 14 states. There are 17.5 million persons in the SPP with 795 generating plants. The 95 companies are evenly split between cooperatives, public power companies and investor-owned utilities such as Westar and Kansas City Power & Light. In 2017, SPP total energy production came from coal (46%), wind (23%), gas (20%), hydro (4%), nuclear (7%) and other. In Kansas, the generation was wind (34.5%), coal (39.5%), nuclear (21.5%), gas (4.4%) and other (.2%).

Kansas has about 14% higher generation in the SPP than energy demand. The SPP operates an integrated marketplace where companies buy and sell wholesale electricity in day-ahead and real-time. The day-ahead markets commits the most cost-effective and reliable mix of generation for the region. Since 2005, there have been \$6.9 billion in transmission investments with \$3 billion in scheduled projects to go. For every \$1 of transmission investment in 2012-2014, SPP expects at least \$3.50 of benefit to rate-payers.

SPP is in the 'renewable breadbasket' of wind and solar. The highest wind speed in the country is within the SPP. In 2001, the SPP had 800 megawatts (MW) of wind capacity whereas in 2017 the capacity was 17,605 MW's. There are 177 wind farms with 9,112 wind turbines. The wind penetration on March 5, 2018 was 58.1%.

Going forward the SPP has these projected MW generation requests: wind – 53,056 MW, solar – 16,571 MW, natural gas – 2,071 MW, and battery storage – 841 MW. Today SPP has only 400 MW's in solar, and battery storage has increased from 40 MW to 841. Battery storage may grow as fast as wind has and SPP believes the potential for wind penetration could reach 75%. Today there is an over capacity of wind so at times wind farms are scaling back power production. The SPP may merge with the Mountain West Transmission Grid (MWTG) that primarily covers Colorado and Wyoming but touches 6 other states. There are 6.4 million MWTG customers – a 35% increase for SPP. There are now seven interties between SPP and MWTG. This would offer great advantages for Kansas wind farms to move power to Denver – the fastest growing city in the U.S. The SPP does acknowledge that energy efficiency is playing a key role in dampening demand, but SPP has not systematically researched energy conservation's role for the next decade.

KRC RELEASES PESTICIDE AND NOXIOUS WEED PAPER

The Kansas Rural Center teamed with Zack Pistora of Sierra Club to produce a white paper, "Pesticides, Noxious Weed Control and Chemical Drift Protection In Kansas." The 29-page paper is intended as an overview of current pesticide and noxious weed law in Kansas, and provides background on pesticide use, trends and emerging problems. The paper also includes recommendations for the state's noxious weed law and calls for improvements in state general pesticide law emphasizing greater emphasis on a more holistic approach to pest management, or integrated pest management, that takes into account cultural, mechanical, biological as well as chemical solutions to pest problems, and adequately addresses drift problems.

The Executive Summary can be read [HERE](#) and the full paper is available [HERE](#) or on KRC's website.

CEP LIVESTREAM FACEBOOK INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The Climate and Energy Project (CEP) is live streaming interviews with leading Kansas Advocacy organizations whose missions include one of the WEALTH topics (Water, Energy, Air, Land, Transportation, and Health). Tune in to CEP LIVE on Facebook every week for the latest! The interviews will take place on Tuesdays at 2PM CST. See schedule below. The first three weeks are available; see links below, with more interviews to come!

CEP LIVE on Facebook Schedule

1/16/18 Dorothy Barnett, CEP; <https://www.facebook.com/CEPheartland/videos/1566576993458825/>

1/23/18 Zack Pistora, Sierra Club; <https://www.facebook.com/CEPheartland/videos/1573871599396031/>

1/30/18 Scot Anglemeyer, Ks. Association of Community Action Agencies; <https://www.facebook.com/CEPheartland/videos/1581837078599483/>

2/6/18 Paul Johnson, Kansas Rural Center;
<https://www.facebook.com/CEPheartland/videos/1589152247867966/>

2/13/18 Spotlight on Integrated Voter Engagement
<https://www.facebook.com/CEPheartland/videos/1596397640476760/>

2/20/18 Jessica Lucas, Clean Energy Business Council
<https://www.facebook.com/CEPheartland/videos/1605956759520848/>

2/27/18 A Visit to the Statehouse 101
<https://www.facebook.com/CEPheartland/videos/1612555765527614/>

3/6/18 Mitzi McFatrach, Kansas Advocates for Better Care
<https://www.facebook.com/CEPheartland/videos/1620649301384927/>

3/13/18 Dawn Buehler, Friends of the KAW

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR MARCH 15!
2018 WEALTH (Water, Energy, Air, Land, Transportation, and Health)
Day of Education and Advocacy at the Capitol March 15, 2018.
RSVP - bit.ly/2018WEALTHDay

SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF MARCH 12

Go to kslegislature.org/li for detailed calendar.

From the Field - March 5 - 9, Science Week on Glyphosate

A federal court in San Francisco held a week of hearings on the science surrounding the safety of glyphosate – the world’s most widely used pesticide commonly found in our food and water. In this class action lawsuit, more than 3,000 plaintiffs are suing Monsanto claiming that exposure to glyphosate-based Round-Up caused them or their family members to develop non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. US Judge Vince Chhabria ordered these hearings to be video-recorded and shared publicly over the internet. He has granted permission to explore in open court such things as the ghost-writing of science as well as a controversial 1983 study that EPA scientists at the time said showed evidence of glyphosate’s cancer-causing potential.

During this ‘science week’, the only evidence presented came from experts in cancer science, including epidemiologists, toxicologists and others called to analyze relevant research. There were no cancer victims to tug on heartstrings-- just opposing sides presenting science to a judge who will decide if the lawsuits can move forward. Monsanto has also sued California to stop environmental regulators from requiring cancer warnings on glyphosate products and on February 26 won an injunction blocking such a warning.

(Carey Gillam is research director for the consumer group US Right to Know and the author of *Whitewash – The Story of a Weed Killer, Cancer and the Corruption of Science.*)

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.

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.
- If a member of KNRC, contact Joanna Will at jvoigt@kansasruralcenter.org.
- If a member of KFU contact Mercedes Taylor-Puckett at kfu.mercedes@gmail.com.
- If a member LWVK, contact lwv.kansas@gmail.com.

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

To learn more about the Kansas Rural Center, please visit our website at www.kansasruralcenter.org.

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