

January 31, 2008

The Honorable John Faber, Chairperson
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Statehouse, Room 161-W
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Dear Representative Faber:

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note for HB 2626 by Representative Sloan

In accordance with KSA 75-3715a, the following fiscal note concerning HB 2626 is respectfully submitted to your committee.

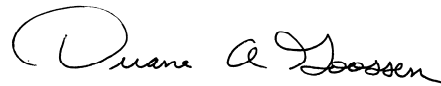
HB 2626 would amend the State Conservation Commission (SCC) authorizing statutes to establish the Kansas Farm and Ranch Land Protection Grant Program within the agency to facilitate the conservation of private working farm and ranch lands. The program would be a cooperative effort with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide grants to local organizations for the purchase of perpetual conservation easements. Organizations would apply to the SCC, and the applications would require the following: documentation from the Internal Revenue Service that the organization meets tax status requirements; a copy of the conservation easement agreement negotiated with the USDA; a written statement that creation of appropriate deed restrictions will occur upon receipt of grant funds; and, a written agreement to implement the terms of the conservation easement. Grant expenditures could include appraisals, surveys, and title searches. The SCC would develop criteria for the ranking and awarding of grant applicants. If a property owner does not fulfill the terms of the agreement, all grant funds would be returned to the SCC. The bill would prohibit cities from using eminent domain to acquire land to be placed in a conservation easement.

The State Conservation Commission indicates that existing funds would be used for possible program expenditures in FY 2009; however, if the program were to grow substantially, the SCC may need to request additional appropriations in future years to cover administrative

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expenses. Administrative expenses would include legal consultation fees associated with the review and processing of all easement applications.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Duane A. Goossen". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Duane A. Goossen
Director of the Budget

cc: Mark Heim, Conservation Commission
Stacey Woolington, Department of Agriculture