



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 645		DATE: 3/23/2021	
COMMITTEE: Agriculture Policy			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: arniedienoff@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/23/2021 4:07 PM	
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I am in Support of this Bill and raising the Thresholds of a "Small Family Farm."



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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: BJ TANKSLEY		PHONE NUMBER: 573-893-1495
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI FARM BUREAU		TITLE:
ADDRESS: 701 SOUTH COUNTY CLUB DRIVE		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65109
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/23/2021 12:00 AM

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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: CASEY WASSER		PHONE NUMBER: 573-291-9809	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION		TITLE: DIRECTOR OF POLICY	
ADDRESS: 734 S COUNTRY CLUB DR			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL: cwasser@mosoy.org	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 3/23/2021 9:06 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: DALE A. AMICK		PHONE NUMBER: 573-680-7277	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 421 EAST MCCARTY			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/23/2021 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: EMILY LEROY		PHONE NUMBER: 573-522-6715	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE		TITLE: LEGISLATIVE LIAISON	
ADDRESS: 1616 MISSOURI BLVD			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65041
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/23/2021 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: JOHN BRYAN		PHONE NUMBER: 573-761-5610	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI POULTRY FEDERATION		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 225 EAST CAPITAL AVENUE			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65102
EMAIL: poultry@socket.net	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/22/2021 9:44 AM	
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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: TONY BENZ		PHONE NUMBER: 573-301-2747
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI AGRICULTURE		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/23/2021 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: JIM KAVPOWICZ		PHONE NUMBER: 573-424-0077	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI COALITION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT		TITLE: RIVER ADVOCATE	
ADDRESS: 1905 WOODIE PROCTOR ROAD			
CITY: COLUMBIA		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65203
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/23/2021 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: MELISSA VATTEROTT		PHONE NUMBER: 314-581-0561	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI COALITION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT		TITLE: FOOD AND FARM POLICY DIRECTOR	
ADDRESS: 3115 S. GRAND BLVD., SUITE 650			
CITY: ST. LOUIS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63139
EMAIL: mvatterott@moenviron.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/22/2021 11:38 AM	
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Dear Chairman Rone and Members of the Committee, Missouri Coalition for the Environment is a statewide, advocacy, nonprofit organization that works to protect Missourians by engaging in issues related to food, water, air, and the environment. On behalf of MCE, I submit testimony urging you to oppose HB 645. HB 645 seeks to modify the Family Farms Act. Family farms are the foundation of Missouri's rural communities and local economies. As Food & Farm Policy Director at MCE, I speak often with Missourians from urban and rural communities alike about our state's food system, what people value the most about it, what they want to see more of in our food system, and how they can play a role - as a farmer, as a consumer, as a food entrepreneur. When most people hear the term "family farm," they think of small-scale operations where parents and their children, maybe also an aunt or uncle or a couple of cousins, work hard together to provide nutritious, delicious food for their local or regional community. MCE is connected to over 200 farms and has a strong network of over 50 farms through our Known & Grown program. The crop producers have on average only 10 acres and the livestock producers raise small or moderate herds of animals out on pasture. As an attorney, I personally understand the complexity of how to define various categories of farms and as a consumer and a food system advocate, I know how confused consumers are by the various farm terms used in marketing. For example, a family-owned farm can incorporate as an LLC and then they are technically still the family farm they have always been while also legally being a corporate farm, too, and consumers sometimes associate corporate farm with industrial agribusiness, which can be but is not always the case. USDA defines family farm as "any farm organized as a sole proprietorship, partnership, or family corporation. Family farms exclude farms organized as nonfamily corporations or cooperatives, as well as farms with hired managers." The USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) notes that "[a]n estimated 70 percent of U.S. farmland will change hands in the next 20 years . . . [and i]f a farm or ranch family has not adequately planned for succession, it is likely to go out of business, be absorbed into ever-larger farming neighbors, or be converted to non-farm uses." NIFA also points out the importance of the growth of local and regional food systems to the success of family farms and to the next generation of farmers (who may very well raise their families on these farms). As a food system advocate in Missouri, I know that most consumers committed to supporting local and regional food systems are committed because they want to support farms in their local communities that are producing healthy food, caring for the natural resources around them, and respectful of their surrounding neighbors' enjoyment of their properties - including cheering for their neighbor-farmer to also succeed. Family farms are important. We need to do whatever we can to keep them around to the benefit of Missouri's rural communities and local economies. Prioritizing helping smaller-scale farms to stay in business will help family farms overall continue to exist. I'll elaborate.

The federal government has transformed our agricultural landscape over the last century giving less financial and technical support for small-scale farms and focusing on the large-scale farms. As a result, small-scale family farms have had to “get big or get out” of the industry and many farms over the decades sold to their neighbors. So now, we have fewer family farms, especially in rural Missouri, and those that remain are getting bigger and bigger because their neighbors can’t stay in the game and so they acquire their neighbors’ land. As farms close up, we have fewer farms. We need farmers to stay in the game and the best way to do that is to help the small-scale farmers stay afloat. The best way to do that is to keep the cap of annual gross sales to \$250,000 to qualify as a family farm for the program. Otherwise, this Act will be a further incentive for farms to “get big or get out,” which is harming Missouri’s rural communities and transforming what Missouri’s farmland prioritizes producing. With increasing demand for Missouri-grown fruits and vegetables, we need more producers growing these items and the bigger farms get, the fewer farmers there are - fewer farmers to work hard growing nutritious food for their local and regional markets. Additionally, the best way for the Family Farms Act to support family farms is to keep the loan amounts at their current caps. You may ask, “Why keep loans smaller? Don’t we want small-scale farms to get as much support as possible?” The answer is yes we do and the best way to do that is to keep the loans smaller so that more family farms can take advantage of this program. Keeping the caps on annual gross sales and on loan amounts lower allows Missouri taxpayers’ dollars to reach more farmers. Allows more farmers to participate, more of Missouri’s farmland to stay in the hands of Missouri farmers, keeps rural and urban economies booming with greater local food production, and builds up local and regional food systems that consumers statewide want to see thrive. All family farms are important to the success of Missouri’s agriculture industry and the economies of both rural and urban communities. In order for family farms to continue to exist, we need to support those family farms that have been around for generations and support the small-scale family farms just getting started after feeling compelled to help meet the increased demand for Missouri-grown food. The Family Farm Act can support these farmers best if it keeps its focus on the little guys. The larger family farms play an important role too, they just do not need the same level of support as their smaller, fellow farms. I would like to also suggest that any future modification to this program include extending the program to family farms that produce fruits and vegetables, as the program currently is only available to family farms that raise livestock. Missouri consumers want more Missouri-grown produce and this program would have the potential to help family farms diversify their produce operations to meet this demand. Increasing Missouri fruit and vegetable production would also help local economies be more self reliant in supplying their own nutritious food. Without modifications to support fruit and vegetable production and without the removal of the increased sales caps and loan amounts, I urge this committee to oppose HB 645. Voting “no” on HB 645 will best support Missouri’s small-scale family farms, their families, our agriculture industry, and our local and regional food economies. Thank you for your time. Sincerely, Melissa Vatterott, JDFood & Farm Policy Director Missouri Coalition for the Environment



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: MICHAEL BERG		PHONE NUMBER: 314-644-1011	
REPRESENTING: SIERRA CLUB MISSOURI CHAPTER		TITLE: SIERRA CLUB MISSOURI CHAPTER POLITICAL DIRECTOR	
ADDRESS: 2818 SUTTON BLVD			
CITY: SAINT LOUIS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63143
EMAIL: Michael.Berg@sierraclub.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/22/2021 12:48 PM	
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Missouri should keep the cap on annual gross sales and on loan amounts. This allows Missouri taxpayers' dollars to reach more farmers and more of the farmers who most need the loans, while promoting smaller scale family agriculture.