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Proposal to Hike Ag Land Values Spawns Backlash

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) - A suburban lawmaker's proposal that would dramatically increase property taxes on Kansas agricultural land has spawned a strong rural backlash.

Farmers also fear that pieces of it will pop up in legislation to close a projected state budget shortfall.

Republican Senator Jeff Melcher of Leawood argues that agricultural land is valued for tax purposes so far below market values that it's unfair.

He also contends the state and local communities are losing millions of dollars they could use to finance public schools and services.

But farmers and agriculture groups see huge potential tax increases.

The Kansas Department of Revenue estimates the annual state and local property taxes on agricultural land would increase by \$890 million. Owners would see an average statewide per-acre increase of 569 percent on irrigated land.

Associated Press