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**Testimony on House Bill 2493
To
House Committee on Local Government**

February 14, 2024

Chairman Bergquist and Members of the Committee:

I am Elmer Ronnebaum, General Manager of the Kansas Rural Water Association. I am submitting comments in opposition to HB 2493, which would require public bidding of projects and purchases by rural water districts when the costs exceed \$25,000.

Rural water districts, just like cities are required to publicly bid projects any time there are state or federal funds involved in the project financing. Rural water districts are not required to bid on projects under present state law, and neither do third-class cities. The Association's counsel has commented there is an old AG's opinion that encourages bidding for these entities, but it is not required

While there are advantages to competitive bidding, bidding of smaller projects would force an increase in costs because of the required completion of full sets of plans and specifications, the process of involving preparation of bid documents, legal fees, bonding, etc. Frankly, some of the projects just do not justify all the additional administration that would be required.

Many purchases by water systems are negotiated. Examples would include storage tank maintenance contracts and the purchase of new metering systems, pipeline or other materials.

Rural water districts generally seek bids from local contractors for their maintenance work or the installation of extensions. Many districts solicit bids on an annual or multi-year basis and those costs will be what the district or others should anticipate over the contract period.

For these reasons, the Association respectfully suggests that placing a requirement for bidding in state law is unnecessary, and especially so on smaller projects.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Elmer Ronnebaum
General Manager