



*Testimony Submitted to the*  
**Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources**  
March 15, 2023

*Kimberly Gencur Svaty, on behalf of*  
*Kansas Municipal Utilities*

**Testimony in Support of HB 2302**

Kansas Municipal Utilities (KMU) is the statewide association representing Kansas cities and other public or not-for-profit agencies involved in the ownership and operation of municipal utilities across Kansas. Formed in 1928, KMU provides assistance and information to members with regard to workforce training and educational programs, Mutual Aid, regulatory and legislative assistance and numerous other services toward the advancement of municipal utilities to achieve maximum benefits for the customer-owners served by our utilities. Our membership ranges in size from some of the largest utilities in the state such as those operated by the Kansas City Board of Public Utilities and the City of Wichita to some of the smallest utility systems in the state serving fewer than 100 customers.

On behalf of the community-owned utilities across the state, KMU would like to express its support of HB 2302. The issue of long-term funding for the state water plan fund is not new to Kansas Municipal Utilities and our members – we were member participants of the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force on Water in the 2010s and most other long-term water funding conversations that have occurred across the state over the last several decades.

The chronic cycle of study/discuss/report/inaction on a long-term funding plan for water is why HB 2302 is so important. A few years ago, the work of the Blue-Ribbon Task Force on Water laid the foundation for much of the discussion today. It was a group of individuals representing agriculture, cities, industry, and other stakeholders that helped identify the issues. That effort included many of the very same people and stakeholders on that Task Force that are in this room today. Today, we find ourselves in a position where water issues have been pushed to the forefront not only in Kansas but other regions as well. The State of Kansas is now in the position of having sufficient funding available to provide sustaining support of the Kansas Water Plan and a legislative willingness to move the effort forward.

Kansas Municipal Utilities recently reported to the House Committee on Water about the services we provide to communities across Kansas and some of the challenges those communities have in delivering safe, clean drinking water to Kansans. This bill specifically addresses some of those concerns by creating both a technical assistance program and a funding program for communities to be able to access federal funding assistance, something many small communities simply do not have the capacity to do on their own.

Finally, KMU appreciates the opportunity to have this discussion with the committee, and we consider it an important step to improve our water outlook for all Kansans. It feels as though we may have assembled the right mix of people at the right time to get a consequential bill across the finish line that begins to address our long-term water issues.

Kansas Municipal Utilities is pleased to be a partner in this effort and stands ready to assist as HB 2302 moves forward.