

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, Senator Kerschen, Chairman

From: Joe Newland, President of Kansas Farm Bureau

Date: March 15 and 16, 2023

Re: Testimony in support for HB 2302

Chairman Kerschen and members of the Committee, on behalf of Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony giving support for HB 2302. KFB is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 30,000 farm and ranch families through our 105 county Farm Bureau associations.

It is my pleasure to be back with you today to help complete the important work we began over the past 3 years to increase funding for the state water plan fund (SWPF). KFB members have consistently paid into the SWPF for decades and appreciate the return of their fees in the form of cost share funding for various conservation practices implemented across the state.

KFB policy supports the Kansas Water Plan (KWP) being developed under the direction of the Kansas Water Authority and the Kansas Water Office. Our policy supports the KWP being funded by State General Fund or dedicated statewide revenue sources which the bill would accomplish.

HB 2302 would offer a much-needed increase to the SWPF through a minute carve out of existing sales tax that would provide significantly greater and more reliable revenue to help fund the KWP initiatives. Those initiatives, developed through grassroots efforts of Regional Advisory Committee's and the Kansas Water Authority are also supported by KFB policy.

No doubt there are uncertainties regarding some aspects of the bill, such as using water plan funds to employ full-time employees and uncapped employee raises, but we do not want to jeopardize this unique opportunity to enhance the SWPF and get more conservation practices on the ground.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify and give support for HB 2302 and would be happy to address any questions at the appropriate time.