

**Kansas Grain and Feed Association | Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association
Kansas Cooperative Council | Renew Kansas Biofuels Association | Kansas Wheat
Kansas Soybean Association | Kansas Grain Sorghum Producers Association**

March 10, 2020

To: House Committee on Agriculture
From: Randy Stookey, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs, KGFA / KARA / Renew Kansas
816 SW Tyler, Topeka, Kansas 66612 | 785.220.5211

RE: Proponent Joint Testimony on SCR 1614, Supporting Kansas farmers in the Rattlesnake Creek sub-basin in their ongoing effort to protect their water rights and livelihood through a collaborative solution to the region's water impairment issue.

Chairman Highland and members of the Committee on Agriculture, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 1614. This testimony is submitted jointly on behalf of the following: Kansas Grain and Feed Association (KGFA), Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association (KARA), Renew Kansas Biofuels Association (Renew Kansas), Kansas Cooperative Council (KCC), Kansas Soybean Association (KSA), Kansas Wheat, and Kansas Grain Sorghum Producers Association (KGSPA).

KGFA is the state association of the grain receiving, storage, processing, and shipping industry in Kansas. KGFA's membership includes over 950 Kansas business locations and represents 99% of the commercially licensed grain storage in the state. KARA is an agribusiness industry trade association with membership of over 700 companies across Kansas. Renew Kansas is the trade association of the Kansas biofuels industry in Kansas. KCC represents cooperatively structured businesses including agriculture marketing and supply, utility, financial and consumer cooperatives. KSA represents Kansas soybean farmers on legislative and regulatory issues. Kansas Wheat represents Kansas wheat farmers on legislative and regulatory issues. KGSPA represents Kansas farmers of grain sorghum on legislative and regulatory issues.

The Resolution clearly describes the impairment issue in the Rattlesnake Creek sub-basin. Members of the above associations located in the area of the Rattlesnake Creek sub-basin would be greatly harmed by the issuance of impairment orders against the use of groundwater for irrigation. It is critically important to those within the region to find reasonable and sensible resolution of the impairment.

We have been fortunate to have received sufficient quantities of water to ensure irrigation in the basin can continue to generate economic activity essential to the local and state economy. However, while the Basin has not been impaired every year, USFWS may still file for water with Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) in order to secure their water right for long term stabilization, even when sufficient water is present.

We commend KDA for working with basin stakeholders to attempt to arrive at a solution to provide the Refuge with access to sufficient water and to achieve a balance between economic advancement and groundwater conservation stewardship. We urge stakeholders to continue working together to find a

solution through augmentation to supply the intermittent Rattlesnake Creek with water to address the Refuge's impairment.

We agree with the Resolution's call for a collaborative, non-regulatory approach to resolution of the impairment so that direct water administration will be unnecessary. A thoughtful solution should be performance-based and might include implementation of a well-field to supplement the intermittent streamflow of the Rattlesnake Creek.

We believe a successful outcome can be achieved for the Refuge without harming the region's farmers and agribusinesses, or depriving their communities of the economic lifeblood generated by sustainable agricultural production.

We agree with the Resolution that collaborative solutions to the impairment should avoid excessive government control of agricultural irrigation, and protect the interests and livelihoods of our Kansas farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses that are vital to the success of our state.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to testify in support of SCR 1614, and we ask that the committee pass the resolution out favorably.