



KANZA COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

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To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
From: Nicholas A. Krehbiel, Chief Operations Officer
Date: 2-17-2020
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 collaborate solution to the region's water impairment issue.

Chairman Kerschen and members of the Committee on Agriculture, on behalf of the Kanza Cooperative Association and our 4000+ members, I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today. I am honored to be here in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 1614 as the issues surrounding the events of the past few years regarding the Rattlesnake Creek sub-basin are of a monumental importance to our members and the region as a whole.

Kanza Coop is a multi-service member-owned farmer cooperative with locations in Pratt, Stafford, Sedgwick, and Harvey Counties. We have active members throughout this region, as well as the rest of Kansas and some other states. We provide whatever our farmers need to continue to produce the commodities that help feed the world. At this particular point in time, that means feed, fertilizer, crop protection, fuels, grain storage, and as evidenced by my attendance here today, legislative engagement on their behalf. While I stand here today as the Chief of Operations for Kanza, my remarks simultaneously represent our membership, their cooperative, and the communities we are a part of.

I find the resolution to be an accurate representation of the issues at hand, and I am pleased that this issue has your attention here in Topeka. The regions Kanza operates in have a strong irrigation presence and as such, our membership is well aware of the benefits afforded by this agricultural practice. Our communities benefit greatly from it, whether it be from taxes, farm income, charitable giving, or money being reinvested in the region's various businesses. It is a major support system for our rural communities which seem to be continually staring at the precipice of a non-existent future. I say this not as a hyperbolic attempt to garner sympathy, but simply to point out that the rural portions of our state face an uncertain path forward for future generations and an excessive restriction on the lifeblood of these communities represents another obstacle toward a reasonable path for the more sparsely populated areas of our great state.

That being said, we are also fully cognizant of the need for sustainability and the preservation of this valuable resource. The farmers and ranchers in this area have no desire to degrade the aquifer as they know how vital it is to their families beyond their time here on this earth. We also recognize that the needs of the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge need to be met as well. It is the fundamental belief of those of us in the area that there are, in the words of the resolution, "...local, voluntary, collaborative and non-regulatory solutions..." to the issues at hand. Undertaking these efforts in this manner could

provide the KDA with another success story to be able to use as an example of the benefits of collaboration on water rights, economic interests, and the protection of our environment.

I deeply appreciate your willingness to listen to my remarks here today and I close by stating that we support SCR 1614.