

Date: January 24, 2024

Re: HB 2468- Written Proponent

To: House Appropriations, Chairman Waymaster

From: Claudia Hissong, Kansas Farm Bureau

Chairman Waymaster and members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on HB 2468. My name is Claudia Hissong, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) members. 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.

Wildfires have become an increasing threat to Kansas. Governor Kelly established a Wildfire Task Force to take a closer look at opportunities to mitigate threats and review state and federal roles in supporting local communities impacted by these disasters. KFB had the opportunity to have a staff member who was active in coordination of resources during the Four County Fire serve on that task force. The task force spent extensive time researching the issue and compiled a list of recommendations. One of the recommendations was *"the Kansas Legislature should create a dedicated fund that's available for matching grants or financial assistance for mitigation, prevention and recovery."* HB 2468 would establish that fund to be used for any future weather-related disasters.

In times of devastating weather-related disasters, communities have come together and relied on resources through various state and federal agencies, organizations, and programs. The organized effort and coordination of duties laid out in HB 2468 will be of immense importance when an efficient, timely response is needed. Farm Bureau policy supports the coordination among county, state and federal stakeholders along with landowners to provide assistance during and after a disaster.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2468. HB 2468 contains provisions that will greatly benefit Kansans in times of disaster, and we ask for your support of the bill.