



**Before the Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee regarding HB 2302
Joint Testimony of Kansas Department of Agriculture, Kansas Department of
Health and Environment, and Kansas Water Office
March 15, 2023**

Chairman Kerschen and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, it is my pleasure to stand here before you. I am Connie Owen, Director of the Kansas Water Office. I am here not only representing the Kansas Water Office, but I also proudly represent the Kansas Department of Agriculture and Kansas Department of Health and Environment, as I provide you with a shared message that we three agencies crafted collectively.

As many present here today are aware, current revenue of the State Water Plan Fund is not sufficient to meet all current needs described in the Kansas Water Plan. The fee structure supporting the State Water Plan Fund has also remained virtually unchanged since the fund was established in 1989. Over the years, there have been several conversations regarding the need for a long-term funding source which helps further advance efforts to conserve, protect and restore the surface and groundwater resources of our state in both quality and quantity. HB 2302 is a bill that brings the conversation about funding for water to the forefront and further highlights the needs and benefits of additional state investment in our state's water resources for current and future generations through a fundamental shift in how the state will fund water priorities for the state over the next five years.

Many individuals and entities, including the three agencies I am representing today, have spent untold hours over many years working diligently to secure significant increases in funding to implement the Kansas Water Plan. We three agencies wish to express our deep appreciation for the historic level of funding that would be created by HB 2302, and for the clear message it sends that water is our most precious resource.

The agencies have a number of questions regarding implementation of this bill. We pledge to work together at the agency level and with the legislature regarding clarifications. Thank you.