

Proponent Testimony to HB 2302 by the Kansas Corn Growers Association

Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, March 15, 2023

Good morning Chairman Kerschen and members of the committee. The Kansas Corn Growers Association (KCGA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB2302. KCGA represents more than 1,100 members on state and national legislative and regulatory issues and actively works with other organizations to maximize the voice of Kansas corn producers. KCGA is a staunch supporter of voluntary measures to conserve and protect our water resources. Therefore, we stand in favor of HB 2302.

Kansas Corn is the number one non-governmental financial supporter of water technology farms (WTFs) and a strong supporter of water quality programs such as the Regional Conservation Partnership Programs in the Milford Lake watershed. We are also proud to provide a financial match to Kansas State University as part of a multi-million dollar Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research program on carbon sequestration. Additionally, Kansas Corn has actively engaged in water monitoring programs in the past and has supported training the next generation of irrigation conservation professionals and producers through support of the Northwest Kansas Technical College irrigation technology programs.

Kansas Corn played a pivotal role in connecting GMD5 with federal funds to create a watershed plan that will hopefully lead to additional cost-share funding for augmentation into the Quivira Wildlife Area. KCGA Board Member Kent Moore serves as the President of Augmentation Conservation Restoration Economics and Sustainability (ACRES) Foundation and Kansas Corn's VP of Market Development and Policy Josh Roe serves as the Secretary/Treasurer. ACRES is a public-private partnership that recognizes and seeks to act upon the inextricable links between agriculture, conservation, and the economy in securing the long-term sustainability of the South-Central Kansas community. The effort is a collaboration between the community, government, and nonprofits that seeks to fund efforts to safeguard the Refuge as a resource to the community while ensuring continued access to essential services. Kansas Corn remains wholly committed to engaging with all stakeholders in satisfying the impairment claim through the implementation of multiple water savings measures.

Kanas Corn stands in support of this legislation as it opens up additional streams of funding for the State Water Plan Fund (SWPF) and assigns these funds to programs that will benefit agricultural producers across the state. Data gained from the WTFs and our members have shown the adoption of irrigation technology such as upgraded pivot nozzles and soil moisture probes can each lead to 10-15% reductions in water use, without sacrificing yield or producer income. Additional cost-share for the adoption of these technologies will benefit critical areas of the Ogallala Aquifer and can play an important role in satisfying the Quivira Wildlife Area impairment claim.



Kansas Corn also supports additional funds for the Kansas Department of Agriculture-Division of Water Resources (KDA-DWR). The drought across much of the state has placed increasing demands on DWR staff, this has led to uncertainty for current irrigation water rights holders and has placed untimely delays for those seeking new water rights in areas of the state that are still open for surface and groundwater development. KCGA members have been informed by DWR that it will take the minimum of one year before their applications are merely acknowledged, let alone processed. It is our hope that additional staffing resources can allow DWR to be more responsive to stakeholder needs.

In conclusion, KCGA continues its long commitment to conserving and protecting our water resources and we stand at the ready to support programs across the state. We encourage the committee to favorably pass this critical piece of legislation.

