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Kansas

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Rob Manes, Director

January 31, 2018

**Testimony provided to the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee:
Senate Bill 331, Little Jerusalem Badlands**

Dear Chairman Kerschen and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 331, which would establish Little Jerusalem Badlands as a unit of the Kansas state park system. Representing The Nature Conservancy, owner of this magnificent property, I emphasize that our primary goals for the Little Jerusalem Badlands are: 1) to protect the pristine nature of its dramatic geologic formations, archeological features, and unique plant and animal communities; and 2) to provide opportunities for people to experience, enjoy, and understand the natural beauty of the area. We believe these goals will be best served in a partnership between The Nature Conservancy and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism (KDWPT). We will also cultivate partnerships with local governments and other stakeholders to ensure that the new unit of the State park system provides benefits to local communities commensurate with these goals.

While the Conservancy will continue to own the property, we will establish a long-term agreement that will allow KDWPT staff to provide and manage public outdoor recreation opportunities in a manner that protects the property's fragile natural features. As the landowner, the Conservancy will maintain management involvement and oversight, but we will rely on the Department and other mutually selected sources of expertise to design and manage public access.

We urge passage of Senate Bill 331 and anticipate that the Little Jerusalem Badlands will become an important Kansas tourist destination, where people come to experience and understand one of the state's most beautiful natural places. Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Manes".

Rob Manes
Director

C: KDWPT Secretary Robin Jennison