

STATE OF KANSAS

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GOVERNOR JEFF COLYER, M.D.
GARY HARSHBERGER, CHAIRMAN

**Before the
House Committee on Water and Environment
Testimony on HB 2528
Tracy Streeter, Director, Kansas Water Office
February 8, 2018**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Tracy Streeter, and I am the Director of the Kansas Water Office (KWO) and Secretary of the Kansas Water Authority (KWA). I appear before you today on behalf of the KWA, which was created, in part, to advise the Governor, Legislature, and myself on water policy issues.

The KWA greatly appreciates the initiative of the Kansas Legislature in seeking opportunities for enhanced funding to implement the Water Vision and State Water Plan. Clearly, this Committee as well as many other members of the Legislature has placed a high priority on water issues. We are all keenly aware that in order to enhance funding for water without additional revenue, other priorities in the budget are affected.

HB 2528 proposes to increase the Economic Development Initiatives Fund (EDIF) demand transfer to the State Water Plan Fund from \$2 million to \$8 million and establish specific provisions for the expenditure of those funds. As you know, the KWA supports the funding recommendations of the 2017 Blue Ribbon Funding Task Force for Water Resource Management. Those recommendations include the restoration of the existing EDIF demand transfer as well as the existing \$6 million State General Fund demand transfer. In reviewing the current anticipated revenue to the EDIF, we express concern whether the increase in transfer authority will result in a better opportunity to fulfill the KWA funding priorities as outlined in its' 2018 Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature.

Section 2 of the bill contains amendments that would establish additional transfers of the EDIF to three members of our research community. While these entities are critical to enhancing our knowledge and understanding of water issues and solutions, we believe our current efforts establishing a well-coordinated system of communication and partnership among our research universities, agencies, and private organizations to prioritize research needs and pool resources is working. While many of our current priorities align with the issues identified in HB 2528 such as sedimentation, aquifer recharge, and extending the usable lifetime of the Ogallala aquifer, establishing research priorities in statute limits the state's ability to flexibly address emerging issues. Our current system of coordinating and collaborating on research priorities also allows us to

identify the right institution to answer a particular question based on experience and faculty expertise.

Again, we appreciate the intent of HB 2528 to provide a reliable source of funds to implement the Water Vision, State Water Plan and relevant water-related research; however, we feel the Kansas Water Authority was created to provide the Governor and Legislature with annual recommendations relative to the expenditure of the State Water Plan Funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear this morning. I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.