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F. Irene Dirks, Mayor  
Hardy Howard, City Administrator/Clerk

March 10, 2023

To: Senator Dan Kerschen, Chairman Senate Ag & Natural Resources  
From: Hardy D. Howard, City Administrator, City of WaKeeney  
RE: Proponent Testimony on HB 2302

Dear Chairman Kerschen and committee members:

Please use this letter as support for HB 2302 from the City of WaKeeney and its utility system customers.

Some background on myself: I'm a lifelong Kansas, specifically Northwest KS. I grew up on a dryland farm in Trego County, I've seen more than one drought, several dust storms and even a couple of floods (probably take one of those about now!). I've also been the city administrator for WaKeeney for nearly 27 years. I have a pretty good understanding of western Kansas water issues from varying points of view. But that's enough about me.

WaKeeney is lucky in that we have a very stable and viable water source in both quantity and quality (Big Creek alluvial). We are perhaps the exception with regard to our water source, as you don't need to drive very far from WaKeeney to communities that have problems with one or sometimes both. And you probably don't need to hear again that clean water is the most basic, lifegiving thing any community needs.....but it's true.

The City of WaKeeney has been frugal and resourceful with our water system utility and its maintenance and operation. Our own city crews do all of our water main and service line replacements but there are projects that will take greater funding and professional services to complete. Therefore, we strongly support the inclusion of a technical assistance and project grant funds in HB 2302 and the provision of prioritizing full funding to communities under 2,000 in population. That's self-serving for us small communities but I'm not going to apologize for it!

Thank you for your consideration.

  
Hardy D. Howard  
City Administrator, City of WaKeeney