



**To: House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, Rep. Ken Rahjes, Chair**

**From: Floyd Schmidt, President of Kansas Forestry Association**

**Date: January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024**

**RE: HB 2541 – Establishing a state conservation fund**

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Chairman Rahjes and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2541. We are members of the Kansans for Conservation coalition which has led the collaborative drafting process of HB 2541.

Conservation is the proper management of our natural resources and there are few investments more critical to the quality of life in Kansas. Our economic success, public health, and future generations are dependent upon us maintaining and improving these resources. Currently, the state does not provide the proper funding for this work and is subsequently losing out on federal or private matching dollars to the 35 states that have already established dedicated conservation funding, including all four of our neighbors.

Kansas Forestry Association works to maintain healthy woodlands by promoting conservation, forest management, and land management. This funding would allow KFA to not only help individual projects but would contribute to the education of its members and the public. KFA is funded by membership with help from the Kansas Forest Service and the American Forest Foundation.

As outlined above and by our fellow coalition members, the establishment of state conservation funding benefits all Kansans, allows for the proper stewardship of the resources bestowed upon us, and enables the state to be competitive for match opportunities. Therefore, we ask you to support HB 2541.