



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

**From: Nick Levendofsky, Executive Director, Kansas Farmers Union**

**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

Since 1907, Kansas Farmers Union (KFU) has worked to protect and enhance the economic interests and quality of life for family farmers and ranchers and rural communities. We are members of the Kansans for Conservation coalition which has led the collaborative drafting process of this legislation.

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 Farmers Union has a rich history of working to protect and promote the interests of family farmers and ranchers by taking a leadership role in advocating for farming, ranching and agricultural interests across the state. Through grassroots policy and local involvement, our members and staff play a key role in bringing concerns, issues, and needs to the attention of local, state, and national decision makers. KFU's state and national policy document is proposed, discussed, and ratified each year at our state convention. KFU members have long made state funding of conservation programs a policy priority, and we are glad to join this coalition in advancing that priority.

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 this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

Nick Levendofsky  
Executive Director  
Kansas Farmers Union