



February 13, 2023

Kansas House Water Committee
The Honorable Chairman Minnix

Re: House Bill 2302

Kansas State House Water Committee:

The City of Ottawa is fortunate to own and operate a municipal electric facility and we have worked at keeping rates affordable for our citizens. In doing so we now find ourselves in a position where not only are we having to raise rates, but these increases are also not sufficient to cover capital needs. As you all are aware costs in the last few years have grown faster than we can possibly raise rates to cover. That said we believe it is urgent that we find funds to design, upgrade or replace existing infrastructure. Our current plant is 40+ years old and is reaching the expected useful life, water mains are aging, and we need to be designing alternative emergency water supplies for all our Kansas communities. This seems to be a common issue with other municipal electric facilities in the state - we simply cannot raise rates to a level that is unaffordable to our citizens. This only leads to failure as consumers find they do not have the funds to afford paying the bill. We must keep up with advances in technology that would help create more efficient systems and conserve our most precious natural resource.

Furthermore, it is imperative that we continue programs that educate the public as to how they can play a part in solving this issue, from rain barrels to low flow toilets we need to amass a campaign for conservation. The future of our water supply is bigger than each community and must be addressed globally by using State and Federal funds for improvements. **Therefore, we strongly support HB 2302.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard U. Nienstedt
City Manager
City of Ottawa, Kansas

cc: Dennis Tharp, Director of Utilities
Eric Crowley, Mayor
Sara Caylor, City Commissioner

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