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To: House Committee on Water, Representative Jim Minnix, Chairman

From: Kent Askren, Public Policy Director for Kansas Farm Bureau

Date: February 6, 2024

Re: Written testimony providing qualified support of HB 2634

Chairman Minnix and members of the Committee, on behalf of Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in qualified support of HB 2634. KFB is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 30,000 farm and ranch families through our 105 county Farm Bureau associations.

KFB has policy supporting the concept of flexibility in utilizing water rights to promote greater profitability, but those flexibilities must not compromise protecting the stability of the waters source of supply or result in the harming of existing water rights.

This committee has heard from various experts and stakeholders about the dramatic decline of the Ogallala aquifer. We urge the committee to ensure that any enhanced corrective control measures result in the desired outcome of preserving the resource indefinitely.

We ask that the committee be fully satisfied that authorizing the requested enhanced corrective controls will meet state goals for the Ogallala aquifer and that adequate safeguards are in place for enforcement.

Historically, multi-year flex accounts, have been a useful tool to accommodate flexible water use while holding long-term usage to average or less amounts. We must ask ourselves, is average good enough when we are talking about the Ogallala aquifer which is in a serious state of perpetual freefall.

Flexibility can be a great tool to help deal with unpredictable Kansas weather and to help maximize production from every drop of water applied. We must be confident though that flexibility benefits align with adequate protections of our water resources and Kansas water right holders.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony with qualified support for HB 2634.