KANSAS MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

Testimony Submitted to the
Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
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Kimberly Svaty, on behalf of the
Kansas Municipal Utilities

Testimony in Support of HB 2113

Thank you Chairman Peck, Vice-Chair Alley, Ranking Member Ware and members of the committee for scheduling a hearing and the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2113. The Kansas Municipal Utilities is pleased to stand as an organization in support of the bill.

Kansas Municipal Utilities (KMU) is the statewide association representing Kansas cities and other public or not-for-profit organizations involved in the ownership and operation of publicly owned utilities across Kansas. Formed in 1928, KMU provides assistance and information to members with regard to workforce training and educational programs, mutual aid, regulatory and legislative assistance and numerous other services toward the advancement of municipal utilities to achieve maximum benefits for the customer-owners served by our utilities. Our membership ranges in size from some of the largest utilities in the state such as those operated by the Kansas City Board of Public Utilities and the City of Wichita down to some of the smallest utility systems serving fewer than 100 customers.

Kansas Municipal Utilities, on behalf of its members and the over 900 public water systems across the State of Kansas, supports HB 2113. This committee originated HB 2302, the historic bill that would set in motion an effort to improve Kansas' overall funding of the state water plan and specific water programs and grants. At the time even this committee acknowledged that even more needed to be done, and HB 2113 is a continuation of the Kansas Legislature's effort to invest more in the state's most precious natural resource.

KMU supports the development of the conservation fund outlined in this bill, as well as the statutory increase in funds to programs already outlined in HB 2302. Our hope is that future legislatures consider to appreciate the multiplying effect these funds create when spent on long-term water infrastructure projects, or in the case of HB 2113 also water quality testing for domestic wells statewide. Access to clean, safe drinking water is the first line of defense for public health.

It has been noted by the Kansas Water Office that requests for funds has always exceeded funds available for the new grants program, but by continuing to invest in these programs early the hope is that in the future the backlog of projects can become manageable. HB 2113 creates the environment where this can happen. Thank you and we would stand for questions at the appropriate time.