

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

From: David J Kraft, Executive Director, Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition

Date: January 22, 2024

RE: HB2541 – Establishing a State Conservation Fund

The Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition (KGLC) throughout its existence has always had a mission of protecting, preserving, and promoting the enhancement and regeneration of grazing lands in Kansas.

The KGLC is directed by a board of 12 members who are all active landowners, operators, and ranchers across Kansas.

Throughout our history the Coalition has focused on bringing attention to threats that exist on rangelands and pointing land stewards toward proven conservation practices and methods which protect, enhance, and regenerate the natural resources of our great state.

As threats ranging from woody encroachment, noxious weeds, and invasive species continue to spread across the state, private landowners, and operators, face daily battles in stopping the spread and impact of these threats.

The need for continuing education, awareness, and partnering with stakeholders to apply conservation on all land uses remains vital and urgent. This awareness and education needs are not just needs that exists within the rural areas of Kansas, but to all citizens and stakeholders that benefit and depend upon the natural resources so important to Kansas and the country. These benefits and uses extend across areas dedicated to ranching, farming, wildlife, forestry, and recreation.

The KGLC supports the creation of a Kansas Conservation Fund where financial resources can be leveraged with other partnering opportunities to address all kinds of conservation issues on all land uses in Kansas.

Through partnering opportunities supported and enhanced by a state supported conservation fund, the future of natural resource conservation in Kansas would take a positive step forward.