



## **Testimony in Support of House Bill 2302**

Presented by Don Henry

**On Behalf of the City of Wichita**

February 14, 2023

Good morning Chairman Minnix, Vice-Chair Howerton and Ranking Minority Member Vaughn, my name is Don Henry. I'm here representing the City of Wichita, as assistant director of public works and utilities.

The City of Wichita is a proponent of HB 2302 that would designate a portion of the sales tax receipts to fund the water plan in full over the next five years.

A high quality, secure and sustainable water source is paramount for ensuring the health and safety of Kansas residents and the viability of the state's economy, including for agriculture, industry, commerce, and national defense. For decades, the state's water plan has been chronically underfunded. Since its creation in 1989, fees collected from municipal, industrial, and agricultural water users have increased from \$7 to \$13 million dollars annually. In its 2023 Annual Report, the Kansas Water Office estimates the cost to implement the Kansas Water Plan exceeds \$69 million per year.

The City of Wichita, furnishes a regional supply of water to a half a million people including residents of Wichita, Derby, Bel Aire, Rose Hill, Benton, Park City, Kechi, Valley Center, Bentley, and 3 rural water districts. This water is crucial for ensuring needs are met for domestic service, fire protection, medical services on a regional scale, education, industry, commerce and for supplying national defense efforts including McConnell AFB.

Wichita's water supply includes surface water from Cheney Reservoir and the Equus Beds wellfield. Investments delineated in the Kansas Water Plan for reservoir storage preservation, groundwater sustainability including conservation and remediation of contaminated groundwater, and municipal projects, are key and would be to the benefit of all users now, and for future generations. The City of Wichita additionally supports this legislation's efforts to support communities' pursuit of federal funding for projects, by allowing for needed cost-share and technical expertise.

HB 2302 would be a step in the right direction by securing funding for the water plan over the next five years. This initiative is timely in light of current state ending balances; and therefore, Wichita is supportive of HB 2302.