



February 10, 2023

Chairman Jim Minnix
House Committee on Water
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Dear Chairman Minnix and members of the House Committee on Water:

HB 2302 establishes funding for engineering, technical assistance, and grant applications, as well as grant funding for water infrastructure projects, as administered by the Kansas water office. As someone who is familiar with the necessity of such services, I support this bill.

Providing clean, safe, and resilient water has always been one of the most vital and basic services. Our own water plant was built over a century ago, and has been maintained over the years. Funding for loans has provided financing for this work, and has allowed us to provide consistently good water for decades.

New regulations at all levels, however, will provide financial challenges to maintain compliance in the future – the Lead and Copper Rule, future potential regulation of Per and Polyflourinated Substances (PFAS, or “forever chemicals”) are two examples that may have significant impacts on our ability to maintain our infrastructure. For a water supply facility like the one our city provides, keeping up with these new requirements can be both daunting and potentially costly from a financial position.

Having the expertise available at the state level to respond to such compliance is just one part of maintaining the water infrastructure. As noted above, there are components that are already over a century old in the water treatment facility, and water pipe that is many decades old. Thankfully, many of those components were well designed, but they require constant maintenance and periodic evaluation to make sure that our water system is providing clean, safe, and resilient water services into the future. Grant assistance as well as grant writing and application expertise are key to our future ability to leverage those grant funds to keep our infrastructure functional.

As noted above, for these reasons the City of Independence is a proponent of this bill and the impacts that it will have on the ability of Kansans to maintain their water infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Kelly Passauer
Independence City Manager