

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

From: Glenn Walker, Grassland Owner, Brookville, KS

Date: February 6th, 2025

RE: HB 2063 – Establishing a state conservation fund

Why I am here today. As most of you know our area does not look today like it did when the pioneers first arrived here. On our land there were no or nearly no trees. It was mile after mile of prairie grass with small creeks running across all or most of it for the entire year. I still remember the first time my dad and I discovered a cedar tree growing in one of our pastures. One of us commented on how nice it was to see that tree. Man, if we had only known!!! Today the biggest problem we grassland owners face is the control of invasive plants, especially the eastern red cedar, long thorned locust, and hedge. They rob the natural prairie of the space to produce grass and of water, an essential for growth. I have read that an eastern red cedar 10 feet in height can drink up to 50 gallons of water per day. I know you have driven by some pastures covered with cedars that must be very short of water. Most of the year my major work is cutting trees by hand; I try to get them when they're small because that is easiest. Fire would likely be the best method of control but it is difficult to get the crew necessary and one does not want to take the chance of a fire getting away when some are so opposed to fire. The federal government offers some help in paying for tree control but it is not enough. We need further help to ensure that our prairies endure. Once they become tree covered the natural prairie wildlife will disappear, the value as a food source for livestock drops, and the dangers of wild fires increases greatly with the dense growth of cedar trees. I would ask that you consider helping to finance further conservation efforts in Kansas. Thank you.

Glenn Walker Brookville, KS