



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

From: Jennifer Simmelink, Executive Director, Kansas Soil Health Alliance

Date: February 6th, 2025

RE: HB 2063 – Establishing a state conservation fund

Chairman Rahjes and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2063. The Kansas Soil Health Alliance is a farmer and rancher led 501c3 organization with the mission of improving and protecting Kansas's soil through farmer and rancher led education and resources. We are members of the Kansans for Conservation coalition which has led the collaborative drafting process of HB 2063.

Conservation is the proper management of our natural resources and there are few investments more critical to the quality of life in Kansas. Our economic success, public health, and future generations are dependent upon us maintaining and improving these resources. Currently, the state does not provide dedicated funding for this work and is subsequently losing out on federal or private matching dollars to the 35 states that have already established dedicated conservation funding, including all four of our neighbors.

The Kansas Soil Health Alliance works to achieve our mission in many ways – coordinating farmer-led educational field days and workshop, connecting agency, NGO, and food companies to Kansas growers, leading soil health coaching networks and other peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and conducting on-farm research. Each of our projects are grant funding with the need to acquire matching funds often one of the biggest hurdles in completing grant applications. Opening up a new pool of matching funds would enable our organization to more efficiently advance our mission and improve farm profitability and sustainability across Kansas.

As outlined above and by our fellow coalition members, the establishment of state conservation funding benefits all Kansans, allows for the proper stewardship of the resources bestowed upon us, and enables the state to be competitive for match opportunities. Therefore, we ask you to support HB 2063.

[CONTACT INFORMATION]