



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

From: Laura Lutz, Director, Government Affairs, Evergy

Date: February 6th, 2025

RE: HB 2063 – Establishing a state conservation fund – IN SUPPORT, WRITTEN ONLY

Chairman Rahjes and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2063. Evergy is the state's largest investor-owned electric utility, serving nearly 800,000 Kansans covering half the state. Our Green Team, comprised of employees and retiree volunteers, completes 50 to 70 projects per year, mostly on weekends and evenings. The Green Team collaborates with conservation groups, agencies and schools in enhancing and fostering an understanding of the Kansas environment as well as improving natural habitats and helping provide access to important environmental areas. We are members of the Kansans for Conservation coalition which has led the collaborative drafting process of HB 2063.

Evergy is proud to play a role in the proper management of our state's natural resources, and there are few investments more critical to the quality of life in Kansas. Evergy invests in conservation efforts alongside many other private companies. The ability for the state to provide matching funds would greatly leverage the impact we are able to collaboratively achieve. Our state's 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.

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. We urge you to support HB 2063, enhancing the state's ability to protect its beloved natural resources for years to come.