

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

From: Rev. Thad Holcombe, Moderator for LETUS (Lawrence Ecology Teams United in Sustainability)

Date: February 6th, 2025

RE: HB 2063 – Establishing a state conservation fund

Chairman Rahjes/Members of Committee, I am communicating with you as the Moderator of LETUS (Lawrence Ecology Teams United in Sustainability). We are an interfaith network of earth care teams in Lawrence. The faith communities represented are as follows: First Presbyterian, Lawrence Jewish Community Congregation, Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Plymouth Congregational, Oread Friends Meeting, St. John the Evangelist Catholic Parish, Trinity Episcopal, Islamic Center of Lawrence, Zen Center of Lawrence.

We are members of the Kansans for Conservation coalition. Our being a coalition member is prompted, in part, by the following quote of E.O. Wilson, a prominent American biologist and Harvard University professor:

"The worst thing that will probably happen—in fact is already well underway—is not energy depletion, economic collapse, conventional war, or the expansion of totalitarian governments. As terrible as these catastrophes would be for us, they can be repaired in a few generations. The one process now going on that will take millions of years to correct is loss of genetic and species diversity by the destruction of natural habitats. This is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us."

This bill will assist in the conservation of natural habitats and therefore biodiversity ("genetic and species diversity") which is so important.

Thank you for considering approval of this important legislative endeavor.