

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

From: Andrea Kelly, Executive Director, Mulvane Recreation Foundation

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 Mulvane Recreation Foundation is dedicated to fostering recreation, conservation, and sustainability in our community. 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 depend upon us maintaining and improving these resources. Currently, the state does not provide dedicated funding for conservation work, causing Kansas to lose out on federal and private matching dollars—resources that 35 other states, including all four of our neighbors, are already leveraging for conservation initiatives.

The Mulvane Recreation Foundation owns 40 acres that we are planning to develop into an outdoor recreation and conservation education space. While we do not currently manage extensive land or park space, we recognize the essential role that natural greenspaces play in our communities. We strongly support the conservation efforts led by our partners at the Kansas Recreation and Park Association (KRPA) and local parks and recreation departments across the state.

Additionally, our foundation is committed to sustainability through **the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) initiatives** and environmental education in partnership with **the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE)**. Dedicated conservation funding would provide crucial resources for projects like ours and others across Kansas, ensuring the protection of natural areas, wildlife, and water resources while expanding outdoor recreation and education opportunities for all Kansans.

We also hope that HB 2063 will allow organizations like ours to access funding through the **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)** and similar programs, helping to turn our vision of a conservation-focused recreation space into reality. Without state conservation funding, Kansas remains at a competitive disadvantage in securing these critical matching dollars.

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 respectfully ask you to support HB 2063 to ensure that Kansas can protect and enhance its natural resources for generations to come.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.