



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

From: Sarah Hill-Nelson, The Bowersock Mills & Power Company

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 Bowersock Mills & Power Company operates a hydroelectric power plant on the Kansas River, and is a member 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 Expanded Kansas River Hydropower Project is a 7MW hydropower plant with the potential to generate an average of approximately 32,000,000 kWh of clean, renewable electricity every year. The production of hydroelectric energy does not consume any water, rather it uses the weight of the water to drive turbines, then passing those flows on downstream for other uses. Continued production of this non-polluting energy requires continuation of historic water flows in the Kansas River. Maintaining historic flow rates in the Kansas River is currently jeopardized by the over appropriation of water and the reduction of storage capacity of reservoirs in the Kansas River Basin among other issues. Conservation practices have been proven to mitigate sedimentation in reservoirs, and are significantly less expensive than the dredging that will be required to maintain water storage if sedimentation is not addressed. The proposed conservation fund will make Kansas eligible to receive funding from outside sources, both federal and private, that can help our state address these critical issues.

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.

Sincerely,
Sarah Hill-Nelson