



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

**From: Bevin Law, President, Kansas Association of Conservation Districts**

**Date: February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**RE: HB 2063 – Establishing a state conservation fund**

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Chairman Rahjes and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2063. The Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) represents the individual 105 conservation districts and 525 volunteer board members that serve on those boards. 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 mission statement of KACD and its member districts is “Providing local leadership to protect and improve Kansas Natural Resources through collaboration, education and implementation.”

Holding true to our mission statement, districts collaborate with a myriad of local, state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations to identify resource issues and prioritize actions and initiatives. KACD has been an active member of the Kansans For Conservation Coalition since our first meeting. We know that we can achieve much more working together with these organizations as we all have common goals.

Protection of our working lands in Kansas is essential to sustain and improve our natural resources. Water quantity and quality, improved soil health, drought resilience, productive rangelands and diverse wildlife habitats are critical to sustaining our family farms and ranches environmentally and economically as well as improving quality of life.

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.