



February 13, 2025

The Honorable Ken Rahjes  
Chair  
Committee on Agriculture &  
Natural Resources  
300 W. 10<sup>th</sup> St.  
Topeka, KS 66612

The Honorable Lane Neelly  
Vice Chair  
Committee on Agriculture &  
Natural Resources  
300 W. 10<sup>th</sup> St.  
Topeka, KS 66612

The Honorable Linda Featherston  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture &  
Natural Resources  
300 W. 10<sup>th</sup> St.  
Topeka, KS 66612

**RE: House Bill 2153**

Dear Representatives,

The Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO) writes to express our opposition to Kansas House Bill 2153, and respectfully requests this committee consider the potential increased risks posed to public safety, the environment, and the economy should the bill advance without amendment.

ASDSO is a national professional association whose membership includes the fifty state dam safety programs in addition to the territory of Puerto Rico—and over 3,000 other dam safety professionals and stakeholders from across the country. The association's mission is to improve the condition and safety of dams and lower the risk of dam failures through education, support for state dam safety programs, and fostering a unified dam safety community.

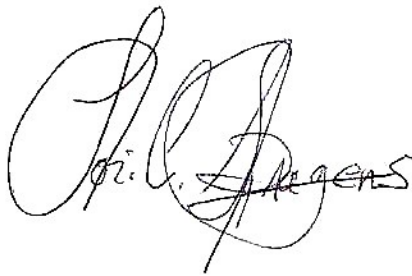
Kansas is home to over 6,000 dams—2,531 of which are regulated by the state. This includes over 300 high-hazard potential dams. The potential consequences of dam failures are severe, and it is imperative that Kansas continues to strengthen its approach to dam inspections and maintenance and remain on par with other state dam safety programs. The decision to deregulate certain dams could result in the state being unaware of potentially dangerous structures that pose serious risks to downstream communities. We believe that this bill would ultimately lead to greater risk, more unregulated water structures, and the inevitable failure of

one of these dams with devastating consequences for public safety, the economy, and the environment.

The bifurcation of agricultural dams from non-agricultural dams by HB 2153 based on usage, height, and acreage will have the effect of creating a needlessly complex regulatory framework for dam owners. It will also have the effect of deregulating some dams that are currently regulated by the state. Upping the regulated height from 25 to 30 feet for agricultural-use dams will result in a potentially less safe environment for downstream communities and property with nearly half of the state's high-hazard potential dams becoming exempt from regulatory oversight. Most states do not utilize a split regulatory framework of this nature making Kansas an outlier should this bill pass without amendment.

ASDSO urges this committee to reject House Bill 2153 as written. We are committed to working collaboratively with the legislature and other stakeholders to find solutions that enhance the safety and security of Kansas residents, rather than reducing critical oversight that protects lives and property.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori C. Spragens". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Lori C. Spragens  
Executive Director