



February 10, 2025

To: House Committee on Water
From: City of Edgerton
Re: Support for HB 2113

Dear Chairman Minnix and Committee Members,

Thank for you the opportunity to explain why the City of Edgerton urges you to vote in favor of HB 2113 to increase funding for the Technical Assistance Fund Grants and Water Project Fund Grants.

Cities across Kansas face many unfunded state and federal mandates. The recent lead and copper rule revision is a great example of how local systems are expected to implement and uphold federal water safety requirements in perpetuity. We recognize the good intentions behind the federal rules, but a complete system inventory and public catalog do not come without costs. Our small team spent hundreds of manhours on inspections and combing through data to meet the requirements. Further mandates, like potential PFAS regulations, would only strain cities further. Planning for future unknown policy shifts makes grant funds like these especially crucial for cities.

Water system investments are a need for every city. In Edgerton, our average system is 35-45 years old. Communities our size have deferred maintenance activities due to limitations of funding. Likewise, our average sanitary system is approximately 20-30 years old. Edgerton's Big Bull Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant was built in 2013. We are closely monitoring for system breakdowns because many components have a typical life of 10-15 years. These components are often expensive. Water systems statewide are faced with having to choose between minimal maintenance on newer assets and spending money and effort on older assets, only to have those new ones start to fail.

As developers continue to look to Kansas for projects and Kansas farmers continue to feed the world, the state must ensure availability for water for all Kansans. The raw water we have contracted through the state as a source of water for treatment needs to be studied to ensure its viability in the years to come. The Water Project Fund and Technical Assistance Fund grants help municipalities and counties prepare for the future. Additional funding for these programs directly benefits everyone.

Boosting available funding through the State Water Plan and Technical Assistance Grants would help cities like Edgerton, especially as it relates to economic development. For example, we need a Water Master Plan to help us prioritize projects moving forward. The master plan would model our utility system, assess the current conditions and gather data so that we can leverage public-private partnerships as economic development occurs. A Water Master Plan not only would provide operational and maintenance recommendations, but also help us identify limitations in our system



that could hinder future economic development. We want to encourage developers to continue to look to Kansas as a place to do business and bring jobs. Preparing for future water infrastructure needs is a key piece of that development puzzle.


Like many cities, Edgerton's water system fund is severely limited. Only a rate increase on our customers would allow us to pay for the master planning process or other major capital improvements. Many of our residents are older people living on fixed incomes or blue-collar families that live paycheck-to-paycheck. Charging them more for water only further exacerbates financial strain.

We have applied and been rejected in the past for Technical Assistance Fund and Water Projects Fund Grants. In 2024, of the hundreds of applications received, only 16.75% were funded. The need is great statewide, so any additional funding the Legislature awards would help communities like ours. We know that being able to leverage state funds to supplement our local dollars allows us to do larger projects with a greater community impact.

The Technical Assistance Fund and Water Project Fund Grants help cities like Edgerton address a variety of needs, from emergency connections to water-quality related problems to mitigating the risk of a sanitary sewer overflow. Any funding awarded through these programs will ultimately save taxpayer dollars in the long-term through investment in our essential infrastructure assets. Furthermore, by investing now, the state promotes environmental stewardship, which benefits future generations who will call Kansas home.

We urge you to approve HB 2113 and help cities and water districts continue to improve water related infrastructure for the good of all Kansans.

Sincerely,



Dan Merkh
Public Works Director
Edgerton, Kansas

