



Since 1894

Date: February 10, 2026

To: House Committee on Water  
Rep. Jim Minnix, Chair

From: Aaron M. Popelka, V.P. of Legal and Governmental Affairs, Kansas Livestock Association

Re: **HB 2558 AN ACT concerning water; relating to funding for the state water plan and water infrastructure projects; increasing the amount of moneys transferred from the state general fund to the state water plan fund; requiring the Kansas water office to transfer appropriations for the water technical assistance fund and the water projects grant fund.**

Position: Proponent, In-Person

*The Kansas Livestock Association (KLA), formed in 1894, is a trade association representing nearly 5,600 members on legislative and regulatory issues. KLA members are involved in many aspects of the livestock industry, including seed stock, cow-calf, and stocker cattle production; cattle feeding; dairy production; swine production; grazing land management; and diversified farming operations.*

Thank you, Chairman Minnix, and members of the Committee, for allowing the Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) the opportunity to share our views on HB 2558. KLA supports HB 2558 and its funding of the state water plan through the use of the State General Fund (SGF) for the next five years.

KLA policy supports the Blue Ribbon Funding Task Force for Water Resource Management 2017 recommendation for funding the state water plan by setting aside a percentage of the existing statewide sales tax revenues. KLA has maintained this view since it signed the Task Force report in 2017. Although the legislature did not choose to fund the state water plan through this mechanism, it did agree, through passage of HB 2302 in 2023, to dedicate SGF dollars to meet the needs of the state water plan. HB 2558 builds on that commitment to meet the multiple water-related needs across Kansas.

KLA specifically supports the retention of K.S.A. 82a-955(c)(5) in HB 2558, which encourages the Kansas Water Authority to prioritize the stockwater water protection fees for a stockwater conservation grant program. Unlike other agricultural water users, stockwater users pay \$0.03 per 1,000 gallons of water used. In FY 2026, the Kansas Water Office (KWO) estimates that stockwater fees will raise around \$450,000. This is down from approximately \$558,000 in FY 2022. The decrease is attributable to declining cattle numbers.

Until HB 2302 passed, the stockwater fees paid into the State Water Plan Fund were not used for stockwater conservation projects. In part, this was because the State Water Plan Fund was underfunded and the stockwater fee revenue was used to support non-livestock related projects. HB 2302 gave the livestock industry an opportunity to incentivize more efficient cattle watering systems and potentially pair the practice with a Water Conservation Area for added flexibility among water rights used at a feedyard or dairy.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 was the first year for the program, during which the KWO reported \$11 million in demand. In FY 2025, the legislature funded the program at \$700,000, an amount above the annual fee revenue because the FY 2024 program was significantly overprescribed. The Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Conservation (DOC) administers the program, which it built from scratch by working with industry to develop a straightforward and simple application process. In FY 2025, DOC awarded 13 projects encompassing upgraded water monitoring systems, more efficient cattle waterers, water recycling systems, and water storage tanks.

By continuing to significantly fund the state water plan using the SGF, HB 2558 will ensure that stockwater fees continue to be available for stockwater conservation projects. KLA asks that when the Committee works the bill it recommends HB 2558 favorable for passage.