



CITY OF HUMBOLDT OFFICE OF CITY ADMINISTRATION

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Date: February 9, 2026
To: House Water Committee
From: Cole Herder, City Administrator, City of Humboldt
Re: HB 2558 – Funding for TA and Water Project Grants – Testimony in favor.

Thank you, Chairman Minnix and Committee, for allowing me to submit testimony on HB 2558, in favor of legislation regarding grant funding for Technical Assistance and Water Projects.

The City of Humboldt is a prime example of an older city with aged and failing infrastructure. As a conservative community, we have deferred sewer line and water line replacement well beyond the infrastructure's useful life. In recent years, we have replaced or relined all of our wastewater collection system at a cost of \$6 million. We are currently in process of rehabilitating our water towers and replacing all of our water distribution system lines at a cost of \$16 million. We were very fortunate to be awarded a \$3 million KWO water grant so we could make these much-needed improvements. The project cost is covered by 40-year USDA Rural Development Loans and Grants. We increased sewer rates 52% to \$55.86 per month for a family consuming 5,000 gallons of water. We anticipate that we will raise water rates nearly 100% to approximately \$100 per month for a family consuming 5,000 gallons of water per month.

The improvements don't include updating or rehab to our water and sewer plants, so those costs are coming. We are currently using EPA Technical Assistance to determine necessary improvements to our wastewater plant. Replacement to meet new federal guidelines could be as much as \$30 million. We cannot do these projects without assistance.

Additionally, all water systems in the US will be required to remove lead and galvanized pipes by 2038. We are fortunate that our project will resolve this by 2028 – ten years early. I suspect that several hundred other Kansas cities will be scrambling to meet this mandate. They will all need funding assistance.

For these reasons, I ask the Committee to pass HB 2558 out of committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cole Herder, City Administrator