



Written Testimony Submitted to the
House Water Committee
February 6, 2024

Fred Jones, Water Resource Manager
City of Garden City, Kansas

Written Testimony in Support of HB 2633

The City of Garden City operates Water and Wastewater Utilities that serve approximately 8,800 utility accounts. The City utilities also provide treatment for two Finney County Sanitary Sewer Districts. The City also supplies water or provides contract operations for several rural subdivisions in the Garden City area.

Manny Ortiz
Mayor

Roy Cessna
Commissioner

Bryce Landgraf
Commissioner

Tom Nguyen
Commissioner

Troy R. Unruh
Commissioner

The City has fifteen staff members currently certified with the KDHE Operator Certification Program and several other employees that we are working with to obtain certification. Our utility encourages staff to obtain the highest level of certification possible. Highly certified operators promote the public health protections that are the cornerstone of the water profession.

I have had the opportunity to provide input with other water professionals over the past few years with the KDHE Operator Certification Workgroup, where representatives of multiple public utilities and utility organizations worked with KDHE staff to discuss modernizing the Operator Certification Program. The workgroup has provided an excellent dialogue between the regulatory agency and the utilities.

Matthew C. Allen
City Manager

- We support the elimination of the \$25 certification fee limit. This limit was developed when the current regulations were adopted in the 1970s and needs to be revised to ensure that the KDHE Operator Certification Program has the resources to provide needed services to water and wastewater operators in the state.
- We support ensuring that KDHE Operator Certification Program revenues are entirely returned to the program. The revenue stream needs to ensure that KDHE provides a modern, peer-reviewed operator certification and training program to ensure operators are well-qualified to serve their communities.
- We support any KDHE Operator Certification Program effort that would provide additional certification testing delivery resources. Additional certification testing resources would be helpful to many rural areas that have limited testing opportunities without long-distance travel.

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Water issues, from delivery to the customer to the return of treated water to the environment, are continually changing. Many communities are addressing new issues relating to water quality and quantity that impact the public, business, and industry. These modernization efforts will ensure the KDHE Operator Certification Program continues to play a role in the continuous learning that is a cornerstone of the water profession.