



**Before the
Senate Committee on Natural Resources**

**Kansas Water Authority Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature
Gary Harshberger, Chair, Kansas Water Authority
January 28, 2015**

Chairman Powell and members of the Committee, I am Gary Harshberger, Chair of the Kansas Water Authority (KWA). Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today present the Kansas Water Authority's recommendations for the upcoming legislative session. The Kansas Water Authority's role is to provide recommendations for the coming year, as well as plan for future needs for water and funding of projects.

More than a year ago, in recognition of the critical importance water serves in our state, Governor Sam Brownback challenged the Kansas Water Office and Kansas Department of Agriculture with guidance from the KWA to develop a 50 year vision for our water supply.

As we know, our water resources are diverse across the state and the goals we strive to meet must be diverse as well, and appropriate to the water resource conditions of the area. The Vision and Mission will remain statewide in nature, but the goals will be regional. The KWA has appointed individuals to serve on Regional Goal Setting Teams and ultimately will approve the goals for each region in August 2015.

The priority in the second Draft will remain on voluntary, locally driven and market-based solutions. We continue to hear and recognize that locally developed plans have the highest opportunity for long-term success. The state should provide the necessary tools and support greater flexibility for the management of water resources at the local level. We also continue to hear a local desire to conserve and extend the life of the aquifer. Local landowners and water right holders have the right and responsibility to determine their destiny with respect to long-term water use while balancing conservation and economic growth.

A consistent message we hear is the need to secure, protect and where necessary, restore our reservoir storage. We have previously brought to your attention the need to secure all available storage in our federal reservoirs.

I truly believe Kansans must act now and rise to the challenge to make the best decisions for taking care of our most precious resource. The KWA recommendations for the State Water Plan Fund are included on pages 4 and 5 of this report. In addition to recommendations related to revenue from the traditional fee sources, the KWA recommends restoration of the full State General Fund and Economic Development Initiatives Fund as provided in K.S.A. 82a-953a and 79-4804 respectively. Expenditure recommendations for FY 2016 related to the restoration are contained on page 4 and detailed on pages 10 and 11. We must invest in our infrastructure and this Vision so we can not only survive but prosper as a state.

The Kansas Water Authority looks forward to working with you this session as we continue to improve Kansas water resources and implement the Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas.