

To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Senator Powell, Chairman

From: Kent Askren, Kansas Farm Bureau

Date: January 20, 2016

Re: Testimony SB 330- An act concerning conservation; establishing the Kansas conservation reserve enhancement program (CREP)

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Chairman Powell and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 330. KFB is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 40,000 farm and ranch families through our 105 county Farm Bureau Associations.

KFB has testified before this committee in 2007 and 2012 in support of the Kansas CREP program. Our grassroots developed policy specifically supports a voluntary CREP in Kansas.

Water conservation is the primary management objective of the Upper Arkansas River CREP with several other secondary benefits. Due to the extremely sandy soil conditions, the Upper Arkansas River corridor is at risk of seeing severe environmental damage occur as water supplies diminish. The Upper Arkansas River CREP provides a voluntary, incentive based opportunity for water right owners to conserve water by permanently retiring water rights and receive assistance with conservation practices to help safely transition this highly erodible land to dryland uses.

To date, nearly 35,000 acre-feet of water rights have been retired through voluntary participation in the Upper Arkansas River CREP. In order to continue this good work, we must provide the statutory basis to support the Kansas CREP program and funding. We encourage you to vote favorably on SB 330.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I'd be glad to take questions at the appropriate time.

*Kansas Farm Bureau represents grassroots agriculture. Established in 1919, this non-profit advocacy organization supports farm families who earn their living in a changing industry*