



**House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Testimony in Support of House Bill 2172- Establishing the Water Program Task Force
Presented by Eric Stafford, VP of Government Affairs, Kansas Chamber**

Monday, February 10, 2025

Mister Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs for the Kansas Chamber. The Kansas Chamber represents small, medium and large businesses of all industry segments across the state. We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2172, which establishes the Water Program Task Force.

Water availability and long-term supply is essential for the future of our state, and the legislature took a monumental step by increasing funding for the state's water plan. Looking forward to the long-term outlook and availability of water, HB 2172 establishes a task force to review and plan for the state's risks related to water quality and quantity.

An adequate water supply is essential for sustained economic growth, for not only our agricultural industry, but also for the business community as a whole. As legislators and future Governors deal with supply issues, aging infrastructure, demographic and population changes, there must be an adequate plan outlining necessary investments, potential solutions and proactive steps taken to address needs of Kansas.

HB 2172 establishes criteria for this new task force to consider in addressing water needs in our state through a diverse representation of stakeholders where geographic and industrial needs may vary to craft the long-term strategy for water needs and investments of our state, and sets a deadline to present a report of recommendations to the legislature by January 31, 2026. We appreciate being considered to have representatives of our organization participate in this task force on behalf of the Kansas business community.

In closing, we encourage the committee's support for House Bill 2172 and I am happy to answer questions at the appropriate time.