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**To: House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, Representative Ken Rahjes, Chair**

**From: Kent Askren, Public Policy Director for Kansas Farm Bureau**

**Date: February 10, 2025**

**Re: Written testimony providing support of HB 2172**

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Chair Rahjes and members of the committee, on behalf of Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 2172. KFB is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 30,000 farm and ranch families through our 105 county Farm Bureau associations.

HB 2172 would establish and assign a large and diverse group of Kansans to evaluate our water risk, economic future, and population stability for generations to come with regards to our water resources and identify funding to accomplish recommendations from the task force.

KFB has policy supporting the Kansas Water Plan as the blueprint for planning, managing, conserving, and utilizing the waters of Kansas and the 14 Regional Advisory Committees providing grassroots input into its development. All this planning must align with the Kansas Water Appropriation Act that recognizes water rights as real property rights protected by priority (first in time/first in right) as we struggle to find solutions to our water challenges.

Our member developed policy also recognizes the economic benefit all Kansans enjoy through the beneficial use of water by individual water right holders. Our members, and all water right holders, make substantial investment that depends upon reliable water supplies to add value to the Kansas economy. Consequently, a sound Kansas Water Plan which manages, conserves, and utilizes the waters Kansas should be funded by all Kansans through State General Fund or dedicated statewide revenue sources.

The task force may explore alternative water planning and implementation solutions beyond the capabilities of our current system. That is why KFB is happy to be invited to the task force and contribute to the conversation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support for HB 2172.