



Date: February 10, 2025
To: Chairman Ken Rahjes, House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
From: Shahira Stafford, Kansas Cooperative Council
RE: Proponent Written Testimony on HB 2172

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2172 on behalf of the Kansas Cooperative Council (Co-op Council).

Formed in 1944, the Co-op Council is a voluntary trade association representing all forms of cooperatively structured business in Kansas. Our purpose is to further the understanding of cooperative principals, methods of doing business, and the impact co-ops have on our state's rural economy. Kansas co-ops have over 575 locations, employ over 5,000 people, and represent over 116,000 members.

Our organization represents agricultural cooperatives across Kansas whose farmer-owners depend on reliable access to water resources. We strongly support the establishment of a comprehensive water program task force to analyze our state's water challenges and produce specific, actionable recommendations for the Legislature.

We appreciate geographic representation across all five conservation regions, helping address the diverse water challenges faced in different parts of our state. The balanced membership structure, including both urban and rural interests, will foster collaborative solutions that work for all Kansans.

Most importantly, the focus on funding assessment and recommendations is critical in evaluating current funding adequacy and ensuring our state can meet its water management goals.

The Co-op Council believes that House Bill 2172 reflects a seriousness and urgency in securing a reliable water supply for future generations, and we respectfully ask for your support.