

City of
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**Written Testimony on House Bill 2112
Submitted to the House Committee of Water**

Mayor Heath Austin

City of Potwin

January 30, 2025

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Heath Austin; I am the Mayor for the City of Potwin. I am writing in opposition to House Bill 2112. HB 2112 removes the amount that the Kansas Dept. of Health and Environment can charge for the water operator certification fee. This will allow KDHE to purchase the national exam at costs yet to be determined. KDHE's proposed changes to the certification programs, including additional "Distribution" certification requirements for water systems, requiring small water systems to maintain two separate certifications to run the drinking water system in addition to a wastewater certification to operate the wastewater utility. The added certification is because the national exams do not incorporate treatment and distribution system questions in the same exam. The national exams also do not cover the current Small System classification that KDHE utilizes, meaning Small System operator exams will still need to be administered by KDHE.

We support the position that the Kansas Rural Water Association board of directors has taken that an advisory committee be created to work with KDHE to review the questions to make sure they are appropriate. The advisory board should decide on the methods that will be used to provide the exams and assist KDHE in ensuring that all exams can be electronic, not just exams for more advance drinking water licenses.

The operator certification program would benefit by having a greater involvement by stakeholders and the training and technical assistance organizations that provide the training. The only way to ensure that this happens is to have an Advisory Committee that is designated by statute. Allowing the agency to outsource the exams is not going to address other fundamental issues with the program and that is what will happen once the present fee cap is eliminated. I encourage you to establish the Advisory Committee and allow it a year's time to review the program and options that are available.

Respectfully,



Heath Austin
City of Potwin Mayor