



Written Testimony Submitted to the  
**HOUSE WATER COMMITTEE**  
January 30, 2025

Fred Jones, Water Resource Manager  
City of Garden City, Kansas

Written Testimony in Support of HB 2112

The City of Garden City operates Water and Wastewater Utilities that serve approximately 8,900 utility accounts. The City utilities also provide treatment for two Finney County Sanitary Sewer Districts and supply water or provide contract operations for several rural subdivisions in the Garden City area.

The City has fifteen staff members currently certified with the KDHE Operator Certification Program and several other employees that we are working with to obtain certification. Our utility encourages staff to obtain the highest level of certification possible. Highly certified operators have demonstrated the competency to understand and ensure that water treatment is administered correctly and documented to safeguard public health protections that impact every Kansan. To that end, our staff seeks continuing education through our memberships with the Kansas Rural Water Association, Kansas Section American Waterworks Association, and Kansas Municipal Utilities. These organizations are partners in the Water Operator training community, and we support any efforts to improve training and certification opportunities, especially in rural areas.

I had the opportunity to provide input with other water professionals previously in the KDHE Operator Certification Workgroup, where representatives of multiple public utilities and utility organizations worked with KDHE staff to discuss modernizing the Operator Certification Program. The workgroup has provided an excellent dialogue between the regulatory agency and the utilities.

- We support the elimination of the \$25 certification fee limit. This limit was developed when the current regulations were adopted in the 1970s and needs to be revised to ensure that the KDHE Operator Certification Program has the resources to provide services required to water and wastewater operators in the state.

- We support any KDHE Operator Certification Program effort that would provide additional certification testing delivery resources. Additional certification testing resources would be helpful to many rural areas that have limited testing opportunities without long-distance travel.

Water issues, from delivery to the customer to the return of treated water to the environment, are continually changing. Many communities are addressing new issues relating to water quality and quantity that impact the public, business, and industry. These modernization efforts will ensure that the KDHE Operator Certification Program continues to play a role in the continuous learning that is a cornerstone of the water profession.

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