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February 16, 2015
Comments to the Committee on Vision 2020

Chairman Sloan, and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Rural Water Association appreciates this opportunity to present information on programs which are operated as a benefit of the Kansas Water Plan and specifically through funding generated by the Clean Drinking Water Fee.

Kansas has more than 900 public water systems. These consist of approximately 600 municipal systems and 265 rural water districts, and others including public wholesale districts and several privately-owned systems. Of the 900-plus systems, more than 500 serve a population of fewer than 500. All of these systems, regardless of size, are required to comply with the provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act which is administered through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. It is an understatement to say that many of the drinking water regulations pose significant administrative challenges to the operators, city clerks and water system managers -- and to governing bodies who are often challenged to make expensive improvements to treatment processes to comply with the various regulations.

The Kansas Water Plan has provided for funding to help cities and rural systems meet many of their operational challenges. Since 1992, the Water Plan has funded a contract that has been operated by the Kansas Rural Water Association to provide direct, onsite assistance with the myriad of daily operation and maintenance issues that water systems face. That contract has also focused on reducing unaccounted for water by public water systems. Those utilities that have a 30 percent or higher unaccounted for water are identified; the contract targets those and the Association works with them to bring that loss under control. Annually, this contract helps the Association conduct approximately 100 water loss surveys. For example, in FY14, the Association identified and helped correct loss of approximately 203 million gallons that would have purchase or production costs of nearly \$600,000. In a year's time, that contract provides help to approximately 250 to 275 cities and 200 rural water systems.

The Clean Drinking Water Fee is set at 3 cents per thousand gallons sold at retail. It is estimated to provide \$3.1 million in FY 16. Existing statute calls for 15 percent of the Fee to be dedicated to providing technical assistance to public water systems. The contract with the Association is \$325,000 in FY15.

I have included a copy of the report that the Association provided on the activity under that contract in FY14. The assistance is invaluable to hundreds of small systems. They contribute to the fee which supports that assistance and I'm confident are willing to continue to do so.

The Association also supports the acquisition of additional storage in reservoirs. The costs of that however likely exceed the capacity of only those systems involved in the marketing programs.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elmer Ronnebaum".

Elmer Ronnebaum
General Manager