

To: House Vision 2020 Committee, Representative Sloan, Chairman

From: Kent Askren, Kansas Farm Bureau

Date: March 4, 2015

Re: State Water Plan Fund

Chairman Sloan and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) policy regarding priorities for and funding of the Kansas Water Plan (KWP). I am Kent Askren, Public Policy Director for KFB.

KFB member developed policy recognizes the importance of the KWP and its broad uses. Specifically KFB policy promotes State Water Plan Fund (SWPF) expenditure ***for cost-sharing of land treatment for highly erodible lands and riparian areas, construction of livestock waste management facilities, grazing land management, plugging abandoned wells and upgrading rural septic systems.***

The KWP is designed to help benefit all Kansans and should therefore be ***funded through State General Fund (SGF) or dedicated statewide revenue sources.*** For numerous years the statutorily required \$6M SGF demand transfer to the SWPF has not occurred. Consequently, many projects and programs designed to meet KWP objectives have not been completed.

Our members contribute to the water protection fee (\$0.03/1,000 gallons) in each statutorily assigned category of stockwatering, industrial and municipal water use (K.S.A. 82a-954). In addition, our members pay a tonnage fee on fertilizer purchases and for the registration of pesticides. These fees combined make up the majority of the revenue going into the SWPF.

The failure to fund the KWP leaves our members and the state of Kansas vulnerable to heavy handed federal mandates, downstream neighbors and 3<sup>rd</sup> party lawsuits. Without statewide funding, agriculture continues to shoulder the brunt of the financial load to fund the water plan with no way to pass along those added expenses, diminishing the ability of landowners to self-fund conservation projects.

We appreciate this opportunity to share with you the KFB perspective on the SWPF and encourage you to fund the KWP through statewide revenue sources for the benefit of all Kansans. I'd be happy to field any questions at the appropriate time.