



City of
VALLEY FALLS

Incorporated May 17, 1854

02/10/2023

HB 2302

Supportive Testimony

Written Only

Chairman and members of the committee:

The City of Valley Falls is in support of HB 2302. The City of Valley Falls is located at the crossing of K-16 and K-4 just 20 miles North of Topeka. Valley Falls is a third-class city with a population of 1,039 and an annual budget of \$2.5 million.

The City of Valley Falls is located on the Delaware River, which is the sole water supply for the community. With the current drought conditions, the water supply has become critical and must be monitored daily for conservation measures. At present, if the City were to lose the supply from the Delaware River due to the drought conditions, only 20% of the total water supply could be replaced through connections into surrounding Rural Water Districts. The City has been working to find alternative water sources to continue to supply the community. Of which, all options come at a heavy price with one alternative option estimated to cost over \$10 million.

In addition to the water supply emergency, the City of Valley Falls is dealing with aged and failing infrastructure. The majority of the City's water mains and service lines are well over 100 years in age. In just 2022 alone, the City of Valley Falls suffered from 14 different water main breaks. One of which drained a water tower of 50,000 gallons in less than 4 hours and initiated a boil order. The City has over 20 miles of water mains with about 80% in need of replacement estimating at over \$20 million in cost. The City also has a 70 year old water plant in need of over \$10 million of updates. In addition, the City has invested over \$200 thousand in maintenance and repairs to the two water towers in town.

Just this month, the City raised sewer and water rates, doubling the cost for minimum usage and additional 1,000 gallons. The rates will continue to increase by 2% each year thereafter. The increased rates takes an average residential utility bill of \$80 and drives it up to nearly \$150. This is and will put a strain on our businesses and residents. These new rates have only scratched the surface of the revenue needed for all the repairs, replacement, and maintenance needed to both the water and sewer systems.

In conclusion, I am in support of HB 2302. I think this funding and much more is needed to aid in infrastructure replacement and repairs throughout the whole state of Kansas. Without water and sewer, economic development and the growth of this state will halt.

Sincerely,

Audree Guzman

City Administrator

cityadmin@valleyfalls.org