

Testimony of William Bradley Favoring Passage Of HB 2686- Feb. 15, 2022

Thank you, committee members and Mr. Chairman, for your hard work on this important issue and for taking public testimony. I am William (Brad) Bradley. I live in Overland Park, KS. I grew up on a farm in rural Douglas County, KS, and was a Master 4-Her and National 4-H award winner. I actively manage a little over 2000 acres of agricultural land in Bourbon and Linn counties, Kansas, and Bates county, MO, using regenerative agriculture techniques for cropland and grazing land. I am immediate past chair of The Nature Conservancy Board of Trustees in Kansas, a member and past chair of the Kansas River Regional Advisory Council of the Kansas Water Office. More about me is found at the end of this testimony.

I strongly support the passage of HB2686. It is a long-overdue reorganization of accountability and responsibility for water quality (pollution) issues and quantity (supply) issues. No longer will issues be batted from one agency to another, or fall between the cracks, or suffer turf battles with agencies beholden to entrenched constituencies. It reorganizes Groundwater Management Districts and improves their transparency. It streamlines water priority rights administration. And, perhaps most importantly, it provides a permanent and increased funding mechanism for badly needed water quality and quantity improvement projects, spreading funding responsibility equitably across municipal, industrial, and agricultural interests. This will allow for many local projects that will directly improve the water situation in Kansas.

It is obvious that the committee has delved deeply into the myriad current frustrations and has thoughtfully drafted a bi-partisan response that seeks to be fair to all concerned. It is a good bill. Given the staggering nature of the water problems facing Kansas, with more than three in four Kansas streams significantly impaired, the increased occurrence of large harmful algal blooms, reservoir in-siltation drastically cutting storage capacity, salt and radiation pollution fears from western groundwater, and the urgent need to pay for reservoir water we have already committed to purchase, I fear that failure to pass this bill will be a missed opportunity that is not likely to come again for a generation. Addressing these problems also helps wildlife and the healthy natural world ecosystem services we all need to sustain life on this planet. I urge the committee, and the legislature, to resist the pressure of special interests to chip away at one part or another of this bill, which would upset the fair and equitable balance that the committee's drafting has achieved. I ask that HB 2686 be enacted promptly into law. Thank you again to the Committee, and its Chairman, for their excellent hard work.

More about William Bradley: After fifteen years practicing law in Hutchinson and Wichita, including on water law issues, I co-founded NIC Inc., headquartered in Olathe, KS. It became a public company in 1999 (NASDAQ: EGOV), and in 2021 it became a subsidiary of Tyler Technologies of Dallas with a purchase price of \$2.3 billion dollars. I retired from NIC in 2015, having held a number of senior executive titles, including Chief Operating Officer for six years. I am also a Kansas National Guard veteran, serving as an officer in the Artillery and the JAG branches. I am a co-founder and major funder of www.FarmTender.us, a service launching in Q1 2022, that allows regenerative farmers and landowners seeking regenerative farmers to find each other. And, I serve as a board member of The Nature Conservancy Board of Trustees in Argentina, and The Teton Regional Land Trust (upper Snake River headwaters) in Idaho.

