

February 9, 2023

Rep. Ken Rahjes,

Chairman House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee  
Kansas State Capitol 300 SW 10th St. Topeka, Kansas 66612

Dear Chairman Rahjes and Members of the House Committee of Agriculture and Natural Resources,

My name is John Masterson and I am writing in support of HB 2331, creating Lehigh Portland State Park. I am a lifelong Kansan and except for college, the Navy, and four years on the Student Services staff at Emporia State University, a lifelong resident of Iola. I recently retired from Allen County Community College after a 40-year career at the College, the last 30 as its President.

I have been on the Executive Board of Iola Industries, Inc. for more than ten years and the lake and surrounding land becoming a State Park would be a dream come true for our organization. Even though the lake area is Iola Industries' most valuable asset, our desire has always been for it to become a public place. The lake and surrounding trails' ability to attract visitors from across Kansas and provide recreation and enjoyment to our area residents would make them a great benefit to attracting business and industry to our area. It would also benefit the recruitment of potential employees for those businesses and industries.

Thinking about the 300+ students housed at the community college or nearby, I can visualize students checking out bike-share bicycles from the College, riding the two blocks to get on the Southwind Trail and then being able to ride to the Lehigh Portland Lake entirely on existing trails, where they could picnic, swim, and enjoy the outdoors. What a fantastic benefit to the mental and physical health of the young people we serve!

Selfishly, as an elderly gentleman, it is important that I, and those like me, take advantage of opportunities for healthy recreation. I have been an avid user of our trail system since it was established. The addition of this beautiful lake and its surrounding area will make me a regular there and I will add swimming and boating to my walking activities.

I urge you to support this legislation to make Lehigh Portland Lake a reality. Thank you for your service to our State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Masterson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

John Masterson

Vice President Iola Industries

President Allen County Community College - Retired