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**Testimony on SB 330 to
The House Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee
Susan Metzger, Assistant Secretary and Interim Director Division of Conservation
Kansas Department of Agriculture
March 10, 2016**

Good afternoon, Chairman Schwartz, and members of the committee. I am Susan Metzger, Assistant Secretary with the Kansas Department of Agriculture. I appreciate the opportunity to appear in support of SB 330, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). This bill would authorize the Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Conservation to administer CREP for the purpose of implementing water quality and quantity projects.

When evaluating this bill in the Senate Natural Resources Committee and subsequent subcommittee meetings, the Department coordinated with partnering stakeholder organizations including the Kansas Coop Council, Kansas Farm Bureau, and Kansas Grain and Feed Association to identify amendments that provide the desired authority to offer CREP in Kansas, but place reasonable sidebars to the Division's authority in administering the program. We fully support SB 330 as amended by the Senate Natural Resources Committee. Key amendments include:

- Limit the total number of acres enrolled in Kansas in CREP to 40,000 acres.
- Limit the number of acres eligible for enrollment in CREP in Kansas to one-half of the existing county conservation reserve program (CRP) acres expiring unless federal law permits certain agricultural activities on CRP.
- Limit the number of acres enrolled in any one CREP county to 25 percent of the total acreage in each CREP.
- No whole-field enrollments shall be accepted into a CREP established for water quality purposes.
- Lands enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program as of January 1, 2008, shall not be eligible for enrollment in CREP.
- Ensure water rights retired in water quantity CREPs are in good standing and will result in conservation.
- An annual report of all CREP activities shall be submitted to the legislature.
- An economic assessment of the CREP shall be provided to the legislature every five years.

SB 330 provides the state the ability to significantly leverage state and private funds to meet specific water resource goals in targeted areas of the state. The above provisions ensures CREP is delivered in a responsible and accountable manner.

I appreciate the opportunity to share this information and provide our support for SB 330.