



**Before the
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Testimony on SB 330
Earl Lewis, Assistant Director, Kansas Water Office
March 10, 2016**

Good morning, Chairman Schwartz, and members of the Committee, I am Earl Lewis, Assistant Director of the Kansas Water Office. On behalf of the Kansas Water Authority, I am here to provide testimony in support of SB 330, legislation to authorize the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

The Kansas Water Authority supports this legislation for several reasons. First, the Kansas Sediment and Nutrient Reduction CREP will improve the quality of the project area waterways that serve as drinking water sources for area residents. This program will also support implementation of the Kansas Nutrient Reduction Framework developed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, thus demonstrating Kansas' commitment to addressing nutrient-related water quality issues. Practices implemented will reduce sedimentation and thereby slow the rate of storage loss in downstream reservoirs. The program will enhance the effectiveness of other programs and activities in the watersheds that focus on reducing nutrients and sedimentation. In addition, the project will improve wildlife habitat. Finally, the buffers, filter strips and other practices installed under the Kansas Sediment and Nutrient Reduction CREP will enable farmers to protect water quality while maintaining the productivity of their farms.

As many of you know, to implement the Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas, Regional Advisory Committees have been formed to develop action plans for the attainment of regionalized goals in the 14 Planning Areas. Many of these goals rely on a long-term, sustainable CREP program to minimize nutrient and sediment runoff in targeted federal reservoirs. This authorization will enable local stakeholders across Kansas to actively secure, restore and protect water supply storage and water quality through the installation of these practices.

KWA was pleased the Senate Natural Resources Committee worked through differences on the bill as introduced, and was able to come to a consensus on advancing the legislation. These changes, including limiting the total number of acres enrolled, limiting the number of acres eligible, and ensuring conservation through water right retirements, etc., are changes which still allow the benefits of CREP to be realized.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present information in support of SB 330. I will be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

