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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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**House Agriculture Committee  
Testimony in Support of HR 6018**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Agriculture Committee:

Residents of western Kansas have a serious water issues affecting the quality of both surface and ground water. For years we have faced water quantity issues. A depleting aquifer and challenges with our neighbor to the west regarding diversion of water from the Arkansas River among them. Legal action and improved water use practices, coupled with the return of normal rainfall have, at least for the present time, provided some relief from the issue of water quantity. Today we are facing a significant issue regarding the quality of the water supply that supports both agriculture and human life in western Kansas.

The intent of the Resolution before you today is to send a strong message to policy makers in Washington that western Kansas is in need of assistance in order to assure a safe water supply for the future. The cost of treating water contaminated with uranium is high. Communities do not have the resources necessary to scale water treatment across the affected region. Some things we should consider:

- 1) The Arkansas River Compact agreement with Colorado and Congress protects Kansas against loss of "useable Stateline flows" and preserves a minimum of status quo conditions of 1948 for Kansas when the agreement occurred. We must address the **usefulness** of the river flows delivered to SW Kansas and what they are doing to the Kansas fresh water Ogallala Aquifer.
- 2) We can't mitigate or fix it if we are not working on the basin problem with Colorado and federal partners.
- 3) We should address the growing problem now, when our upstream neighbor and federal partners are also trying to address the problem that includes a Colorado legislative resolution this year and funding the federally authorized Ark Valley Conduit.

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- 4) The Arkansas Valley Conduit (AVC) is a 130-mile pipeline with spurs that would serve as many as 40 communities and 50,000 people east of Pueblo. It will deliver filtered fresh water ready for treatment from Pueblo Reservoir.

The message of this resolution is simple. Don't forget about Kansas. We are a part of the Arkansas River Valley and we need help too.

The City of Lakin, located in Kearny County, population 2,200 people with approximately 970 water meters, recently completed a water treatment project at a cost of over \$6.5 million. Water rates increased significantly. The base charge for residential water service went from \$4.17 per month to \$40.16 per month and the usage charge above the base doubled. It is not uncommon for my monthly water bill to be as high as \$150 during the summer months.

Western Kansas will need help in addressing the issue of water quality in the Arkansas River basin. We need to send a strong message to our federal partners now in order to have any consideration going forward.

I ask that you report HR 6018 favorably.