

STATE OF KANSAS

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GOVERNOR LAURA KELLY

August 18, 2023

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1894 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

I am writing to request that the Bureau of Reclamation quickly expand the Lower Colorado River Basin Conservation and Efficiency Program (the LC Program) to Kansas. The High Plains Aquifer and the interconnected Ogallala Aquifer are primary water sources for much of Kansas, including a very productive region for our agricultural industry. Over time, water levels in many areas of the aquifer have decreased, which has caused some parts of Kansas to be the driest on record. Despite recent precipitation in parts of the state, this summer's wheat harvest was one of the worst we've had in the past fifty years, and as of August 10, 2023, over two million Kansans lived in drought-stricken areas.

Expanding the LC Program would immediately allow us to amplify our efforts to mitigate the intensity and impact of drought in Kansas. Areas with long-standing challenges such as the Rattlesnake Creek basin are in immediate need of relief. The Rattlesnake Creek provides water to the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge which includes 22,000 acres of unique wetland habitat. In addition to helping preserve the Quivira, expanding the LC Program is a vital part of our efforts to mitigate economic impacts to communities in this region, including our critical agriculture industry. Stakeholders from our agricultural industry are already working with state agencies to ensure that if funding is made available, it can be used efficiently and effectively to address this issue.

Expanding the LC Program would give us one more way to address the effects that exceptionally dry conditions have placed on Kansans. A timely expansion of this program could help Kansas family farms and ranches, small towns, and wildlife avoid the worst of the severe and potentially irreversible short and long-term repercussions that are predicted.

The Kansas Department of Agriculture and the Kansas Water Office will be providing more detail regarding this request to the Bureau of Reclamation and are ready to answer any questions regarding the importance of programs like this to Kansas. I fully support this request and hope to see the LC Program expanded in the near future.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Kelly".

Laura Kelly
Governor of Kansas

CC: Camille Calimlim Touton, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation
Wayne Pullan, Upper Colorado Regional Director, Bureau of Reclamation
Martha Williams, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Dennis McKinney, Kansas State Executive Director, USDA Farm Service Agency
Brent Esplin, Missouri Basin Regional Director, Bureau of Reclamation