



# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Washington D.C. 20240



October 11, 2023

Earl Lewis, Chief Engineer  
Kansas Department of Agriculture  
Division of Water Resources  
1320 Research Park Drive  
Manhattan, Kansas 66502

Dear Chief Engineer Lewis:

I appreciate the leadership that you and your team at the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources (KDA-DWR) have shown since the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) submitted our request to secure water for water right no. 7571 on February 10, 2023.

As you know, in the months following our filing, I have had the opportunity to hear both from elected officials and other stakeholders in Kansas on this issue. I appreciate your efforts to gather input from stakeholders in helping to find the best path to resolution of the impairment while also allowing space for the completion of the Groundwater Management District #5's (GMD) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and stakeholder collaboration.

To that end, the Service understands KDA-DWR's interest in convening a working group of affected stakeholders to develop a long-term remedy to the Refuge's impairment. We remain open to and supportive of a collaborative approach that makes meaningful progress in addressing the impairment of the water right at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge while minimizing the impact to other water users and the local communities in which they live. Therefore, the Service fully supports KDA-DWR or another representative from the State of Kansas (State) in formulating a working group to develop a collaborative remedy that involves the full participation of the Service, the GMD and other stakeholders to develop options that can be implemented starting January 2025.

To give space for the State to lead on this effort, and to allow for full and robust participation of affected stakeholders, the Service requests the State pursue this collaborative remedy in lieu of KDA-DWR issuing administration orders at this time for 2024. This letter also serves as a request to secure water for 2025 and beyond if alternative actions that achieve the same results cannot be achieved or implemented in a timely manner.

Thank you for your continued leadership on this difficult and important issue. Please contact Matt Hogan, Regional Director, Mountain Prairie Region, at 303-726-6251 or [Matt\\_Hogan@fws.gov](mailto:Matt_Hogan@fws.gov) if you have any questions or would like to discuss further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martha Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Martha Williams  
Director

cc: Governor Laura Kelly