

Jim Stanford
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Stafford, Kansas 67578
620.278.6169

August 16, 2023

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

I am writing to convey my grave concern over the US Fish & Wildlife Service call for water rights at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge (QNWR) as of February 2023. This would have disastrous effects on Stafford County, Kansas which is ground zero for water rights restrictions within the Rattlesnake Creek basin.

I work in Key Account Sales for a multi-billion-dollar Certified B corporation, own a hunting lodge that focuses primarily on waterfowl, and I am an elected Stafford County Commissioner in District #1 with most of the QNWR refuge inside my district.

We need a healthy Quivira refuge along with a flourishing agricultural and farming community. Both sides of the equation are especially important. If irrigation water rights are drastically slashed our county as our largest industry and my hunting business will be crushed financially. Waterfowl need the QNWR refuge just as much as they need food from the surrounding farm fields. My clients bring in valuable tourism revenue to the state and our local economy.

Our county desperately needs our number one industry, agriculture, to be strong and healthy. Our school districts, local government, hospitals, grocery stores, and many other businesses are dependent on the jobs, tax base revenue, and the opportunity for us to prosper in a rural setting.

Our state needs to continue to be prosperous from Stafford County, KS west to the Colorado border where 40% of the state's Gross Domestic Product is delivered, primarily from agriculture.

As a resident, local business owner, and commissioner I am requesting you to instruct the US Fish & Wildlife Service to continue negotiations with the appropriate agencies involved and remove their call for water.

I believe through continued negotiations with USFWS, NRCS, Kansas Department of Agriculture, Chief Engineer, Earl Lewis, and Big Bend Groundwater Management District #5 we will achieve an amicable solution within 12 months to meet the needs of everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Stanford". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Stanford" clearly legible.

Jim Stanford

Stafford County Kansas Commissioner District #1

cc:

US Senator Jerry Moran

US Senator Roger Marshall

US Representatives Ron Estes

USFWS Director Martha Williams

USFWS Regional Director Matt Hogan

Kansas Department of Agriculture Secretary Mike Beam

Kansas Department of Agriculture Chief Engineer Earl Lewis