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August 21, 2023

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

RE: Water Rights at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge (QNWR)  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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 am a local insurance agent, and insure many local farmers with irrigation systems, to help facilitate our local crops, which help the local agriculture in our area. As we have several who come to Stafford County for hunting and this is all located within the QNWR refuge district. And without the local crops, there would seem to be no bird habitat as well.

We need a healthy Quivira refuge along with a flourishing agricultural and farming community. If irrigation water rights are drastically slashed in our county a large part of our industry, agriculture will be crushed financially, and farmers are what feed our nation at home and nationally. Waterfowl need the QNWR refuge just as much as they need food from the surrounding farm fields.

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

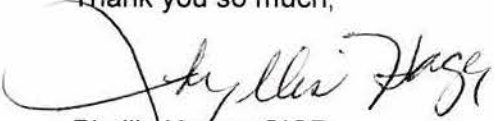
Our state needs to continue to be prosperous from Stafford County, Kansas west to the Colorado border where 40% of the state's Gross Domestic Product is delivered, primarily from agriculture.

As a resident, local business owner, and member of our community I am requesting to 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 the next 12 months to meet the need of everyone.

Thank you so much,



Phyllis Hager, CISR