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January 26, 2022

Senator Bostelman, Chair
and Members of the Natural Resources Committee
State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

RE: LB 925 (Gragert) Resilient Soils and Water Quality Act

Support

Dear Senator Bostelman and Members of the Natural Resources Committee,

For the record, the LWWNE **supports** LB 925. As one of our priority bills, LB 925 would protect water from contamination and pollution and promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning. We strongly acknowledge the fact that responsibility for managing natural resources must be shared by all levels of government. One of our current program positions highlights how healthy soils can sequester more carbon dioxide, therefore mitigating against climate change which the League recognizes as a problem.

LB 925 seeks to protect and improve soil and water quality throughout the state. Biologically diverse healthy soils can improve yield stability; produce greater financial returns over time; reduce the need for chemical inputs; increase water infiltration rates and water storage capacity making soil more resilient to drought, flooding and erosion; and protect and improve water quality. This bill recognizes that elevated levels of nitrates have been found in our groundwater – threatening some areas of Nebraska’s drinking water. Through the Healthy Soils Task Force formed in 2019, it was found that healthy soils require less chemical inputs, therefore safeguarding against toxic leaching or runoff into water sources.

Soils are complex and vary from one region to the next. By examining the different geographical regions of Nebraska, this bill would implement best agricultural practices for each location, protect public health, address environmental issues and increase awareness through education. With 92% of Nebraska’s land area occupied by farms and ranches, soil health demands new focus. Soil is a vital and living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals and humans. As Franklin D. Roosevelt said after the Dust Bowl, “the nation that destroys its soil, destroys itself.”

Sincerely,

Megan Lyons and Janelle Stevenson
Co-Directors of Natural Resources and Energy
League of Women Voters of Nebraska