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February 15, 2024

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

RE: LB1258 (M. Cavanaugh) - Change requirements relating to certain permits and requirements relating to livestock waste control facilities and animal feeding operations.

SUPPORT - *Please include this written testimony from the League of Women Voters of Nebraska as part of the public hearing record for LB1258.*

Dear Senator Bostelman and Members of the Natural Resources Committee:

The League of Women Voters supports clean drinking water for all Nebraskans and believes that measures should be in place to protect water from contamination and pollution. Access to clean drinking water is becoming a huge problem in Nebraska. Too many of our small and rural communities have drinking water contaminated with nitrates. Nebraska has the highest rate of pediatric cancer in the Midwest and ranks 8th in the nation.¹ Why so high? Researchers point to nitrates in drinking water as one of the possible links to cancer.²

This bill is patterned after existing Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy regulatory language with the addition of a monitoring well installation requirement. The results of the testing in the wells would be reported to the NDEE and to the local Natural Resource District. Monitoring wells would be required for existing and any new concentrated animal feeding operation. Newly approved applications for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations must have a monitoring well or the application will be denied.

With the monitoring well requirement, Nebraska will be able to stay ahead of any further degradation to its groundwater. As stated in the beginning of this testimony, Nebraska has the highest rate of pediatric cancer in the Midwest and ranks 8th in the nation.

¹ Galvin, G. (2018, June 28). Where childhood cancer hits the hardest. *U.S. News and World Report*.
<https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/articles/2018-06-28/cdc-childhood-cancer-rates-highest-in-prosperous-counties-big-cities>

² Ouattara, B. S., Puvvula, J., Abadi, A., Munde, S., Kolok, A. S., Bartelt-Hunt, S., Bell, J. E., Wichman, C. S., & Rogan, E. (2022, February 1). Geospatial distribution of age-adjusted incidence of the three major types of pediatric cancers and waterborne agrichemicals in Nebraska. *Geohealth*. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35372745/>

For the benefit of our future generations, monitoring the quality of our water is of highest priority as 85% of Nebraskans use groundwater as a drinking water source.

For these reasons, the League of Women Voters of Nebraska supports LB1258 and asks that you move this bill to the floor for debate.

Sincerely,

Rachel Gibson, Vice President-Action, LWWNE

Claudia Stevenson, Director of Natural Resources and Energy, LWWNE

MaryLee Moulton and Janelle Stevenson, Co-Presidents, LWWNE