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September 29, 1989

The Honorable Robert Dole
United States Senate
141 Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Dole:

As you are aware, the City of Hays has been aggressively pursuing the identification of possible additional sources of water supply. The City currently withdraws its water from the Smoky Hill River and Big Creek Alluvial Aquifers. However, due to the reduction of stream flows in Western Kansas and the lowering of the ground water table, those two sources of supply are not sufficient to meet even the current needs of the City, let alone providing a supply large enough for future growth. In addition, dryland farm irrigation, no-till farming, terracing and other farming practices that are highly laudable on the part of the agricultural community, also prevent runoff from entering the streambeds which recharge these aquifers. Therefore, the City is unfortunately placed in the position of going an extensive distance to find other water sources.

At the present time, we estimate the Smoky Hill River and Big Creek will have a long term dependable supply of 2,500 acre feet per year. Without extremely stringent conservation measures, the City would normally need approximately 3,500 acre feet per year. This is a long-term shortfall of 1,000 acre feet of water. As you may also be aware, the City of Hays does indeed have a very active and progressive Water Conservation Program. Whereas the national average of water consumption by residents for outside usage (lawn, garden, shrubs, etc.) is 60%, the citizens of Hays have only a 25% usage for that same purpose. However, the residents of our community can only conserve to a certain point and the City must find additional sources of water. We estimate that we will need to acquire an additional 3,000 acre feet of water per year just to meet the current and future needs of our citizens for inside-the-home usage.

We have identified several potential sources of water, but those sources are 60-80 miles away. Our engineers have estimated the cost of acquiring and developing those water supply sources will cost

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approximately 25-30 million dollars. The citizens of Hays are more than willing to tax themselves with increased water rates, property taxes, sales taxes, and other forms of taxation to assist in finding and developing a viable long-term water supply, but we need your help.

The City is very interested in forming a regional cooperative effort with other communities, rural water districts and any other agencies that would be appropriate to share in developing a significant water supply source big enough to serve all interested parties. Through research, we have located an area to the south of Hays as a potential long-term source. We have tentatively identified five rural water districts and seven towns, including Hays, that serve over 31,500 water customers who might benefit from such a project. A joint effort of all of these entities would certainly help protect the future water needs of the citizens being served by these entities well into the next century.

As Western Kansas feels the growing crunch of declining water sources, we feel the federal government should share in the task of finding and developing water supply sources so that people can have adequate water for domestic use within the home. We would request that you please direct your staff to research all available funding sources from FMHA, FHA, and any other agency that might be able to provide loans or grant monies to assist us in our endeavors. We firmly believe that special legislation should even be considered to fund this project, as the dollars involved for this endeavor far exceeds the capacity of any one governmental unit or even a combination of governmental units.

I realize the task that we have asked you to perform is large. However, the water problem facing the communities in our area is also large and almost overwhelming in its magnitude. We recognize that we must take the initiative, but we need your assistance and direction in finding and identifying sources of monies to assist us in our efforts. The City looks forward to working with you and your staff on this project and appreciates whatever assistance that you can provide.

Sincerely,


Kenneth C. Havner
Mayor

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