



KANSAS FARM BUREAU
The Voice of Agriculture

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Kansas Farm Bureau
Policy Statement

House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

HB 2516; An act concerning water

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Submitted by:

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Chairman Powell and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2516 as it relates to the Kansas Water Banking Act. I am Kent Askren, Assistant Director of Natural Resources for the Kansas Farm Bureau. As written, KFB stands in support of HB 2516.

We've gained invaluable experience over the last 10 years with respect to water banking. HB 2516 provides a few adjustments to our existing water banking law which we believe will make the program more appealing.

One proposed improvement would allow water bank charters to become permanent. Interested participants cannot be expected to invest in a bank lease if there is uncertainty the bank is going to remain open for business. Allowing for a water bank charter to become permanent will promote investment security and very likely improve participation.

The bill also proposes that any permanently chartered bank be subject to a review schedule to help insure that the bank is accomplishing the program objectives while at the same time allowing for improvements to be identified and recommended to the chief engineer.

I had the privilege of serving on the first team to evaluate the Central Kansas Water Bank Association. I must admit many on the team, including me, were skeptical of how the bank had performed. But following a thorough review of the statute, regulations and the charter, the team concluded water banking does have a role to play and with some improvements, water banking could be successful in Kansas. The proposals in HB 2516 reflect some of the initial steps needed to improve the program

Water Banking is a valuable component in the suite of options to help bring water usage down in the Rattlesnake Creek drainage basin. Without tools like water banking, the probability of water conflicts will increase while production and revenues will suffer.

As Kansas water law further matures and our water resources advance towards full development, it will take forward thinking concepts like water banking to maximize production without further jeopardizing our water resources.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony, I would be happy to answer questions at the appropriate time.