

901 S. Kansas Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612



Phone: (785)-296-3185
Fax: (785)-296-0878
www.kwo.org

Gary Harshberger, Chair

Sam Brownback, Governor

**Before the
The House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
Testimony on SB 310
Tracy Streeter, Kansas Water Authority Secretary and Kansas Water Office Director
March 2, 2012**

Good morning Chairman Powell and members of the committee. I am Tracy Streeter, Secretary of the Kansas Water Authority and Director of the Kansas Water Office. This proposed legislation originated from the Ogallala Aquifer Advisory Committee, an *ad hoc* committee established by the Kansas Water Authority to make recommendations on ways to conserve and extend the life of the Ogallala aquifer. As Secretary of the Authority I am representing both entities today in support of Senate Bill 310, the Local Enhanced Management Areas.

The Local Enhanced Management Areas (LEMAs) provides a process to support and implement a pro-active, locally-defined conservation plan for a region within a Groundwater Management District (GMD). The *Kansas Water Plan* calls for GMDs to define priority aquifer areas in decline and develop conservation goals. Stakeholders located in the Northwest GMD No. 4 in Sheridan County priority area #6 developed a conservation plan to slow the declines, and provide adequate water to meet current needs through multiple public meetings. However there isn't a program in place to implement a locally defined, mandatory conservation plan. Intensive Groundwater Use Control Areas (IGUCAs) require the Chief Engineer to consider all public hearing testimony before determining the corrective measures. The risk that an IGUCA order would be more encompassing or onerous is a serious disincentive for locals to initiate this approach.

The LEMA provides a process for the GMD to recommend the plan to the Chief Engineer. It is reviewed for clear geographic boundaries within the Groundwater Management District as well as proposed corrective control provisions would meet the goals, and is consistent with state law. If acceptable, the plan goes through a process that includes two public hearings. The Chief Engineer has the option to accept the LEMA plan as submitted, reject it as insufficient to address the conditions, or return it with the option for the GMD to revise and resubmit.

We firmly believe we must support and encourage locally derived solutions to our water shortages. The LEMA proposal is consistent with the direction supported by the Kansas Water Authority and the Ogallala Aquifer Advisory Committee of providing tools for local, stakeholder defined efforts to conserve and extend the life of the aquifer. We offer our strong support for this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee. I will be glad to answer any questions at the appropriate time.

House Ag. & Natural Resources
March 2, 2012
Attachment 8