

# House Committee on Agriculture

## House Bill 2085

### Kansas Rural Water Association

Testimony by Doug Mays

February 5, 2019

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 2085.

The Kansas Rural Water Association has active membership of 265 rural water districts in Kansas, as well as 475 municipalities.

KSA 82a-621 was amended in 2018 to require rural water districts to accept back charges for reinstatement of the benefit unit (membership), and no more than an additional maximum fee of 20 percent of the purchase price of a new benefit unit. Typically, rural water districts are allowed to forfeit the membership of any patron who is more than six months delinquent on payment of the utility bill.

Depending on the situation, especially on properties involved in foreclosure, it was difficult for the water districts to make sure that proper notice was provided to the entity holding the property and prospective owners were also often under the impression that there was no problem with water service because that information was never conveyed to them. The imposition of the full cost of a new membership, which averages \$3,000 and up to \$8,000, was sticker-shock to the new owners who would often only learn of the situation after purchase of the property. The Association supported the legislation that limited the charges for reinstatement of water service for back charges.

The Kansas Rural Water Association does not support a limitation of time for reinstatement, but it does support amending 82a – 621 to limit the requirement for rural water districts to re-establish service only if the capacity of the district's facilities permits. There may be cases when system capacity might have already been allocated to other customers who joined the system in the interim.