



Southwest Kansas
Groundwater Management District No. 3
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Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 2697
Provided To The House Water Committee
From the Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 3 (GMD3)
February 13, 2024

Chairman Minnix, members of the House Water Committee, My name is Mark Rude, and I am Executive Director of the Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 3 (GMD3). I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony today. GMD3 stands opposed to HB 2697 as written.

This bill would restrict or eliminate one of the main purposes of a groundwater management district by limiting the ability of a local board to work with other water managers to implement the GMD3 official management program. In theory it would block a GMDs ability to advise and assist farmers, landowners, agribusiness entities, cities, counties, agencies, or any other potential groundwater partner that currently seek advice and assistance from the GMD on water related concerns.

It is important to remember the key role that GMDs play in local water solutions. The GMD Act has water management as the core function of the Act, and references “management” more than 100 times. In the entire Water Appropriations Act the word management appears only 37 times, primarily when referencing work with GMDs and the management tools of flex accounts and WCAs. Management does not appear in any of the broadly stated powers granted to the chief engineer further indicating the key locally driven management role delegated to local GMD leaders in K.S.A. 82a-1020.

Kansas’ 50-year water vision appropriately recognizes that “local driven solutions have the best chance for providing long term solutions to water problems” and this locally driven process would be impaired by HB 2697 by restricting the local advice and assistance of a GMD. Basically, this bill would take Kansas in the wrong direction to further restrict the close collaborative work necessary to develop long-term solutions to our water problems. For this reason, we oppose HB 2697.