



The Kansas Groundwater Management Districts

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Proponent Testimony on SB 272 before the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee

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Chairman Powell, members of the House Ag & Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 272. All five Kansas Groundwater Management Districts support the concept of providing Kansas water right owners with multi-year flexibility in their water usage. The assistance that SB 272 will provide to GMD members who are coming out of the 2011 drought induced pumping limit overages is significant. This bill provides water users with a viable option for projects that borrowed heavily from 2012 allocations to finish the 2011 crop and who need to assuring crop insurance providers that a normal water supply will be available to irrigated fields this year. This is needed in time for crop insurance deadlines this spring. In that regard, there is a sense of urgency to move this bill.

The concept of multi-year flex accounts is not a new one in Kansas law, but due to certain hurdles in place there has been limited utilization of the existing program. The GMD's suggested some changes to provide for drought response, and that occurred last session. With the impacts of the 2011 drought being so severe, many producers are looking for alternative ways to plan for efficient crop water management that is flexible like the weather conditions. SB 272 as amended provides a positive alternative. SB 272 provides water users a useful option for flexibility while also providing a mechanism to reduce less effective winter irrigation. We believe that the Senate committee amendments helped to further clarify the priority and impairment considerations of a water right enrolled in a multi-year flex account and also corrected an oversight in the 5 year calculation allowable under the net irrigation requirement option.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of all five Kansas GMDs in support of SB 272.