

NORTHWEST KANSAS GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT NO. 4

Shannon Kenyon, Executive Director/Manager

TESTIMONY OPPOSING SB 548

March 14, 2022

**PO Box 905
Colby, Kansas 67701-0905
Phone: (913) 462-3915
Fax: (913) 462-2693
E-mail: skenyon@gmd4.org**

ISSUE: SB 548

Groundwater Management Districts were locally formed by the public to address areas within a distinct boundary with a water problem. Groundwater Management Districts are then tasked with managing the water within their district by a board of directors. Anybody with a water right or that owns more than 40 contiguous acres is allowed to vote and be elected for a director position. This includes all water use types needed for a water right such as irrigation, municipal, stockwater, and industrial to name a few of the prominent use types.

The Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District #4 (GMD 4) in Colby, Kansas assists all its water users in management of their water rights. Irrigation is the prominent use type; but by other use types being involved in GMD 4 we can provide assistance in leak detection for rural municipalities with little money for funding. We assist stockwater users in finding more water to convert for expansion. We also assist the oil and gas industry in locating existing wells for temporary permits.

SB 548 proposes for Groundwater Management Districts to only regulate irrigation. This is very poor policy for many reasons. One of those reasons is within our Sheridan 6 Local Enhanced Management Area (SD 6 LEMA). This area is served widely by a large feedlot that uses not only the local grain produced there but the water as well. The SD 6 LEMA regulates how much water can be pumped in that defined area. Because of this, the area has doubled the life of their aquifer and increased profits. To remove the stockwater component of this could increase consumptive use as they are no longer under GMD 4, and all the efforts to self-regulate water usage will have disastrous impacts on the hard work the irrigators have done to preserve their water supply.

GMD 4 opposes SB 548 because the water supply is for everyone and stakeholders depend on the Groundwater Management Districts to manage the resource for future use for all types of water users.