

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Sharon Schwartz at 3:30pm on Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 346-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Sydney Carlin – Excused

Representative Tom Sloan – Excused

Representative Joe Seiwert – Excused

Committee staff present:

Joanna Wochner, Legislative Research Department

Shirley Jepson, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant

Natalie Scott, Office of Revisor of Statutes

David Wiese, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Heather O'Hara, Legislative Research Department

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Gary Harshberger, Chair, Kansas Water Authority

Greg Foley, Executive Director, Kansas Conservation Commission

Herb Graves, State Association of Kansas Watersheds

Mike Beam, Kansas Livestock Association

John Cowley, Kansas Farm Bureau

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

Briefing on:

Gary Harshberger, Chair, Kansas Water Authority, appeared before the Committee to present the Kansas Water Authority's recommendations for the legislative session ([Attachment 1](#)). A copy of the Kansas Water Authority's annual report was distributed to the Committee (copy available on their website or from the Kansas Water Authority).

Mr. Harshberger stated that the Water Authority's role is to provide recommendations for the coming year as well as plan for future needs for water and funding of projects. Mr. Harshberger noted that the agency is working with the Kansas Water Office, Department of Agriculture and other interested parties to develop a 50-year vision for the state's water supply. The Chairman noted that water resources are diverse across the state and the goals will need to be diverse as well. Mr. Harshberger noted that teams of individuals from each region of the state are working to determine the best goals for each region.

In response to a question from the Committee concerning a listing of the members from each region, Susan Metzger, Department of Agriculture, responded to a question from the Committee stating that a listing of members to the task force is available on the Water Department's website plus information will be made available to the Committee.

Mr. Harshberger indicated that the team's task is to address goals for each region.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES of the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources at 3:30pm on Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 346-S of the Capitol.

Mr. Harshberger responded to questions from the Committee.

Hearing on: HB2061 — Amending the powers and duties of the Kansas department of agriculture division of conservation and the state conservation commission.

Natalie Scott, Revisor, provided an explanation of **HB 2061**, noting that the legislation amends the list of duties the Department of Agriculture Division of Conservation has in consultation with the State Conservation Commission ([Attachment 2](#)). In addition the bill creates a conservation fund in the state treasure for the purpose of collecting the fees authorized in the bill.

Responding to a question from the Committee, Ms. Scott noted a similar bill was addressed in the 2014 Legislative Session.

Representative Tom Moxley presented testimony in support of **HB 2061** ([Attachment 3](#)). The Representative is an attempt to provide assistance to watershed districts who are struggling with new rules established by the Corp of Engineers. Representative Moxley explained that the legislation is a result of meeting with watershed district stakeholders, farm organizations, Department of Agriculture representatives as well as representatives of the Corp of Engineers in an effort to remedy the Corp of Engineer rules. This legislation provides a more economical alternative for watershed districts and the effect on landowners.

Greg Foley, Executive Director of the Division of Conservation, Department of Agriculture, provided testimony in support of **HB 2061** ([Attachment 4](#)). Mr. Foley explained that **HB 2061** amends current Conservation District law to authorize the State Conservation Commission and the Division of Conservation (DOC) to assist local government agencies in their efforts to comply with the federal Clean Water Act. The bill would authorize the DOC to hold easements, to assure completion of restoration projects and to assume third-party responsibility for long-term protection of mitigated stream and wetland sites. Mr. Foley noted that the legislation would allow the Division of Conservation to provide the required third party services to watershed districts and other local government agencies.

Herb Graves, Executive Director of the State Association of Kansas Watersheds (SAKW) presented testimony in support of **HB 2061** ([Attachment 5](#)).

Mike Beam, Sr. Vice President, Kansas Livestock Association (KLA), appeared before the Committee in support of **HB 2061** ([Attachment 6](#)).

John Cowley, Kansas Farm Bureau, appeared before the Committee in support of **HB 2061** ([Attachment 7](#)).

Duane Hund, Contracting Officer, Mill Creek Watershed District #85, provided written testimony in support of **HB 2061** ([Attachment 8](#)).

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES of the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources at 3:30pm on Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 346-S of the Capitol.

The conferees responded to questions from the Committee.

There were no conferees to appear as neutral or in opposition to **HB 2061**.

The hearing on **HB 2061** was closed.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for January 29, 2015.