

HorseThief Reservoir Benefit District

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March 13, 2015

Testimony on HB 2061

Senate Ag Committee:

On behalf of the SAKW and HTRBD I would like to bring your attention to an issue that is of the extreme importance to all Watershed Districts in the state of Kansas. Here in Western Kansas alone there are over 100 completed Watershed projects and more than one hundred additional sites to construct within Watershed general plans. **HorseThief Reservoir is the largest Watershed project and would not have been completed if taxpayers would have had to pay Third Party Conservation Easement holders. The cost would have been too large and the project would have been scrapped. HorseThief Reservoir is a very popular sight in Western Kansas and is visited by over 15,000 tax payers annually.**

If Watersheds have to pay Third Party easement holder's, Watershed projects will become even more costly and the fact is they will not be built. Flood control structures such as HorseThief Reservoir and other smaller dams are very beneficial to landowners and communities.

Since the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has unjustly placed the Third Party Conservation Easement restriction on Watershed Districts in Kansas, we feel that HB 2061 is a step in the right direction to solving our issues for securing 404 permits.

HorseThief Reservoir and all Watersheds in Western Kansas are in favor of HB 2061. We feel that it would be of greater benefit to our landowners and taxpayers if we were allowed to work with the Division of Conservation, as opposed to working with a disinterested third party.

We would like to thank the Senate Ag Committee for taking care of this matter by passing HB 2061.

We would entertain any questions the committee may have through Mr. Herb Graves the SAKW Executive Director.

Sincerely;

Joshua Hobbs/ Manager
HorseThief Reservoir Benefit District