

Dave Jackson, Board Member, North Topeka Water District

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HB 2587 Authorizing Water District Boards to go in to executive session.

Proponent

Hearing date: Monday, 02/05/24

As a fourth generation North Topeka Drainage District Board member responsible for flood protection of the North Topeka community, it has come to my attention that Drainage District Boards are forbidden access to executive sessions as prescribed in the Kansas Open Meetings Act. I can only presume that when the original flood protection bill was enacted in the early 1900's, there may have been a distrust of boards that would have the power of eminent domain and acquire land for possibly personal use not for flood control. One hundred plus years later, the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and FEMA control the flood protection standards in flood prone areas and property acquisition is limited by federal regulation. However, at certain times, property is identified that is no longer necessary for dike maintenance activities and can be disposed of. This has occurred in the past two years and the Board is unable to use the Executive Session to discuss price and terms of the offering.

Similarly, when discussing employee issues, such as wages or personnel issues, it is an untenable situation for the Board. This arose when the Board found it necessary to terminate an employee. I request the Committee favorably consider this bill and recommend passage for action by the full Senate and House.

With respect,

Senator Dave Jackson 2001-5, 18th District