



The Kansas Groundwater Management Districts

Western Kansas GMD1, PO BOX 604, Scott City, KS
Equus Beds GMD2, 313 Spruce St, Halstead, KS
SW KS GMD3, 2009 E. Spruce St, Garden City, KS
NW KS GMD4, PO BOX 905, Colby, KS
Big Bend GMD5, PO BOX 7, Stafford, Ks

Phone # 620 872 5563
Phone # 316 835 2224
Phone # 620 275 7147
Phone # 785 462 3915
Phone # 620 234 5352

Proponent Testimony on HB 2451 before the Senate Agriculture Committee

Mark Rude
Southwest Kansas GMD #3
Tuesday, February 7, 2012

Chairman Taddiken, members of the committee, my name is Mark Rude and I appear today on behalf of all five Kansas Groundwater Management Districts in support of HB 2451.

Throughout the 20th Century, Kansas water law encouraged development and utilization of the available water resource in an attempt to maximize the economic value of the water. The “use it or lose it” provisions of the law ensured that water users, primarily agricultural producers, actively used their water rights or face the possibility of abandonment proceedings. The law was effective in developing the resource but it also created a culture of “use.” This culture and the use it or lose it provisions of the water appropriations act, ingrained in water users the need to pump in order to protect their water right.

This summer, as Governor Brownback convened meetings to develop a plan to extend the usable life of the Ogallala Aquifer, the discussion focused on the shift from a culture of use, to a culture of conservation. HB 2451 helps foster this shift by protecting producers from the abandonment of their water right within areas closed to new appropriation. Knowing that they are not required to pump water every year provides users with the flexibility to plan for the future and make production decisions that help to extend the usable life of the aquifer.

We ask that you support HB 2451, and thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of all five Kansas GMDs.