

**Testimony on H.B. 2516
to
The Senate Agriculture Committee**

**By David Barfield
Chief Engineer
Division of Water Resources
Kansas Department of Agriculture**

March 6, 2012

Chairman Taddiken and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to come before you today in support of House Bill 2516.

The bill has two principal effects: 1) to remove the current limitation on the number of banks that can be created, and 2) to allow banks to become fully “chartered” after completion of their initial trial period, while providing for on-going and periodic review of the banks.

In addition, the bill also changes the current Feb. 10 deadline for the water bank annual report in K.S.A. 82a-766 to April 15. The Feb. 10 deadline requires the Division of Water Resources to mail out water use cards to bank participants prior to January 1 when the rest of the water use cards are sent. This creates extra work for us and confusion for water users. Extending the deadline will prevent this extra work and confusion while preserving the transparency of bank operations.

The thoughtful and thorough report developed by the Central Kansas Water Bank Association Evaluation Team in 2010 under Tracy Streeter’s leadership was impressive. In the coming months, we expect to be able to complete our review of that report and to work with the Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5, the Bank’s sponsor, to implement the appropriate recommendations via a revised charter and implementing regulations. These changes will hopefully lead to expanded participation in the water bank.

Thank you for this opportunity. I am happy to respond to questions at the appropriate time.