



The Kansas Groundwater Management Districts

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Good morning Vice-Chair McGinn and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of all five Groundwater Management Districts in support of SB 310. The GMDs support the ability of local stakeholders to provide input and help develop local management plans to address local issues. The Local Enhanced Management Areas (LEMAs) program envisioned by SB 310 provides a format to allow exactly this type of local control.

LEMAs provide an alternative not allowed under current law that would allow Groundwater Management Districts (GMDs) and stakeholders to develop, at a local level, specific control measures to address specific local issues. After the LEMA plan is developed the Chief Engineer of the Division of Water Resources would hold a hearing focusing solely on the LEMA proposal. After the hearing the Chief Engineer may choose to approve the LEMA, reject it, or return it to the GMD and request modifications. Nothing in SB 310 requires approval of the local plan, but a key point to note is that it ensures local stakeholders are not forced into corrective control measures that they do not approve of as a result of the LEMA process.

As you have heard in previous testimony, prior attempts to develop robust local management plans were deemed to resemble the IGUCA process. This determination effectively halted cooperative efforts to address a local issue. While nothing in SB 310 would alter the existing IGUCA statutes, it does provide a much needed “intermediate step” to help encourage cooperation among affected water right owners.

In conclusion, the Kansas GMDs support the ability of individuals and GMDs to address local issues at a local level. We believe that the LEMA proposal provides a tool that fills a specific management gap and provides incentive for local stakeholders to participate fully in the management process. We ask for your support and urge your passage of SB 310.