

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for inviting Groundwater Management District #1 (GMD1) to share our current water issues, initiatives, and concerns with the committee today.

My name is Greg Graff and I live and farm in Leoti, Kansas. I am on the GMD1 board and the Kansas Water Authority so I am aware of many of the water funding issues in the state. As a member of a GMD that is close to implementing a Local Enhanced Management Area (LEMA), I understand the need to lessen the impact of water reductions on crop production. When the Vision and regional planning meetings are complete and we resolve some crop insurance issues, GMD1 plans to hold public meetings and develop a water use reduction plan that will address all types of water uses with a likely reduction in irrigation use.

In regard to the State Water Plan Fund, Ag producers, through their stockwater, fertilizer and pesticide fees represent a significant portion of the current KWO budget. These dollars have been relatively unused in western Kansas for special or critical projects. The only project funded in GMD 1 in the past that I am aware of is the weather modification program which was eliminated from the state budget in FY'14. We have promoted Weather Mod for its hail suppression benefits which have been well quantified. It also has a rainfall augmentation component that is harder to quantify. We have not used rainfall augmentation to promote funding for the program in Kansas, however several other Weather Mod programs in the United States focus on rainfall augmentation and they have quantified increases in rainfall that supports the continuation of their programs. As we move into an era of reductions in irrigation water use, rainfall augmentation that provides another 1-2 inches of rainfall on top of the natural rain during the growing season will be very important. Sadly, our program is within a couple of years of being shut down if we cannot find additional funding sources. Extremely tight county budgets have reduced county participation. Funding from GMDs 1 & 3, local participating counties, and previously the state water plan fund, have been our only sources of program funding.

We are all aware of the need for water conservation throughout Kansas, but today I will focus on the issues in GMD 1 related to irrigation water conservation. Water savings can be accomplished with both mandatory restrictions and voluntary measures such as adoption of the newest technologies that promote water use efficiency. The rapid adoption of technologies, such as moisture sensors, weather stations, pivot monitors, and the most efficient sprinkler nozzles, could easily result in a 10-20% water savings while maintaining the same level of crop production. If mandatory reductions are put in place, the adoption of these technologies could help lessen the loss of crop production. Farmers, as a group, are always looking for new ways to be more efficient, but how aggressively they adopt new technology varies widely among individual farmers. State and federal cost share programs can greatly accelerate this adoption. With agriculture as Kansas' largest industry the state has a stake in not only extending the aquifer to maintain irrigated crop production, but also to help fund technology to try to maintain our current level of crop production while reducing water use.

We believe any new water fees to fund irrigation water conservation should be generated at the local level and managed by a local board. GMD's are managed by a locally elected board and also have limited assessment authority to support staff and infrastructure. If new funds are to be generated from water fees, we believe the level and use of those fees should be decided and managed by the locally elected board. We need to ensure the GMD's have the authority to levy the fees if they are needed. In recent years the

legislature has given the GMD's new and powerful tools to help manage water use, and you have given farmers flexibility to manage their water which is critical for efficiency. We need to continue to develop and adopt new tools and flexibilities and then ensure state laws will allow them to be used. I encourage your support of the GMD's and the Division of Water Resources to make sure they have the staff to manage these new endeavors.

In summary, both the state and the local community have a stake economically to maintain the irrigated agriculture industry of Kansas for the short and long term. State levied water fees in eastern Kansas, where surface water is owned by the state and is resold and paid for by everyone that benefits from it, seems to be a fair system. A state levied water fee on water that the state has no dollar investment in and is considered to be a property right of the individual using it, is a completely different issue and any fees should be decided on, levied, and managed by the local citizens.

Thank you for your time. I would be glad to answer questions at the appropriate time.