

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Joann Freeborn at 3:30 p.m. on January 22, 2004 in Room 231-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Joann Freeborn- excused
Representative John Faber- excused
Representative Joshua Svaty- excused
Representative Sharon Schwartz- excused

Committee staff present:

Raney Gilliland Legislative Research Department
Mary Torrence, Revisor of Statutes
Mary Ann Graham, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Shelia Frahm, Chair, Natural Resources Legacy Alliance, 109 SW 9th Street, Suite 500, Topeka, KS 66612-1215
Steve Irsik, Chairman, KS Water Authority, 901 SW Kansas, Topeka, KS 66612-1249
Joe Harkins, Director, KS Water Office, 901 SW Kansas, Topeka, KS 66612-1249
Tracy Streeter, Advisor & Executive Director, State Conservation Commission, 109 SW 9th Street, Suite 500, Topeka, KS 66612-1215
John Strickler, Vice-Chairman, Natural Resources Legacy Alliance, 109 SW 9th Street, Suite 500, Topeka, KS 66612-1215

Others attending: See Attached List.

Vice-Chairman Lee Tafanelli called the meeting to order in Chairperson Joann Freeborn's absence. Chairperson Freeborn went to Fort Riley with a group to say farewell to troops leaving for duty in Iraq. Chairman Tafanelli called the committee's attention to a memo from Chairperson Freeborn, that had been distributed, which explains the reason she signed the Kansas Natural Resource Legacy Alliance with a disclaimer of "without endorsement." (See attachment 1)

The Chairman asked if anyone had a bill request at this time. No one came forward.

The Chairman welcomed Shelia Frahm, Chairperson, Kansas Natural Resources Legacy Alliance, to the committee. She and other KNRLA members presented the Final Report of the KNRLA and answered questions concerning the report. As provided by the 2002 Kansas Legislature in SB 504, the Alliance was charged to "develop a vision for using the state's natural resources to assure economic development, a healthy environment, proper protection of natural resources, opportunities for natural resource and environmental education, and quality of life for Kansas families and individual citizens". To meet that charge, the Alliance has organized, held hearings, reviewed current and anticipated future activities of local, state and federal agencies, and provided specific recommendations and strategies for the legislature's consideration. While the task was daunting, the Alliance members and advisors realized immediately the opportunity created in SB 504 is a once in a lifetime opportunity for Kansas. Many of the Alliance members have served on statewide study and review committees/groups to consider important issues such as energy, water, economic development, education and finances. It seems apparent it may be many years before another group such as the KNRLA is again charged with such a comprehensive assignment. With this in mind, the KNRLA did not want to deliver another report that might begin to collect dust. Testimony and review indicate that key leaders have already begun the coordination and communication, and can be charged to develop further recommendations including but not limited to: (1) land use planning and management; (2) groundwater quantity and quality; (3) recognizing and planning for changing demographics; (4) adequate and reliable funding for natural resource use and preservation; (5) conservation on working lands; (6) economic development and tourism; (7) natural resource and