

## **Proponent Testimony to HB 2279 by the Kansas Corn Growers Association**

**House Water Committee, February 9, 2023**

**Brent Rogers, President, Kansas Corn Growers Association**

Good morning Chairman Minnix and members of the committee, my name is Brent Rogers. I am a farmer from Hoxie and serve as the President of the Kansas Corn Growers Association (KCGA). KCGA represents more than 1,100 members on state and national legislative and regulatory issues and actively works with other organizations to maximize the voice of Kansas corn producers. KCGA is a staunch supporter of voluntary measures to conserve and protect our water resources. Therefore, we stand in favor of HB 2279 with suggestions for some minor tweaks to the language.

As part of my farming operations and leadership within Groundwater Management District #4 (GMD4), I am proud to have served a pivotal role in the development of the Sheridan 6 Local Enhanced Management Area (LEMA) and the GMD4 LEMA. Both efforts were the first of their kind in the state, sending a signal that we are committed to the long-term availability of our water resources. Kansas Corn has also been the top non-governmental sponsor of Water Technology Farms across the state, providing more than \$150,000 in direct financial support and staff time. Additionally, KCGA played a pivotal role in helping the board of GMD5 successfully gain access to federal resources that will allow locally-driven solutions to the Quivira Wildlife Refuge impairment issue without the need for legal action.

GMDs are aware of the areas in greatest need of conservation within their borders and make significant investments in these areas. This legislation will further codify the efforts of GMDs to address critical groundwater areas and ensure that the legislature is well informed through ongoing reports. However, the areas of concern are too broadly defined in the proposed language. Perhaps a simpler metric in designating areas of concern could be used by identifying those areas with less than an estimated 50-year usable life. Additionally, review methods by the Chief Engineer and parameters to help determine whether to accept or decline a GMD management plan could avoid misinterpretation or future conflicts between the stakeholders and the Chief Engineer.

In conclusion, KCGA continues its long commitment to conserving and protecting our water resources. Our strong history of participation in water policy and education will only continue to grow in the future. As a farmer and grower leader, I stand at the ready now and in the future to ensure that our water resources are available for generations to come.

