SENATE BILL No. 310

By Committee on Natural Resources

AN ACT concerning water; relating to local enhanced management areas; groundwater management districts.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

Section 1. (a) Whenever a groundwater management district recommends the approval of a local enhanced management plan within the district to address any of the conditions set forth in subsections (a) through (d) of K.S.A. 82a-1036, and amendments thereto, the chief engineer shall review the local enhanced management plan submitted by the groundwater management district. The chief engineer’s review shall be limited to whether the plan:

(1) Proposes clear geographic boundaries;
(2) pertains to an area wholly within the groundwater management district;
(3) proposes goals and corrective control provisions as provided in subsection (f) adequate to meet the stated goals;
(4) includes a compliance monitoring and enforcement element; and
(5) is consistent with state law.

If, based on such review, the chief engineer finds that the local enhanced management plan is acceptable for consideration, the chief engineer shall initiate, as soon as practicable thereafter, proceedings to designate a local enhanced management area.

(b) In any case where proceedings to designate a local enhanced management area are initiated, the chief engineer shall conduct an initial public hearing on the question of designating such an area as a local enhanced management area according to the local enhanced management plan. The initial public hearing shall resolve the following findings of fact:

(1) Whether one or more of the circumstances specified in subsection (a) through (d) of K.S.A. 82a-1036, and amendments thereto, exist;
(2) whether the public interest of K.S.A. 82a-1020, and amendments thereto, requires that one or more corrective control provisions be adopted; and
(3) whether the geographic boundaries are reasonable.

The chief engineer shall conduct a subsequent hearing or hearings only if the initial public hearing is favorable on all three issues of fact and the expansion of geographic boundaries is not recommended. At least 30 days
prior to the date set for any hearing, written notice of such hearing shall
be given to every person holding a water right of record within the area in
question and by one publication in any newspaper of general circulation
within the area in question. The notice shall state the question and shall
denote the time and place of the hearing. At every such hearing, documentary and oral evidence shall be taken and a complete record of the
same shall be kept. **The cost of the initial public hearing and any
subsequent hearings may be paid by the groundwater management
district.**
(c) The subject matter of the hearing or hearings set forth in
subsection (b) shall be limited to the local enhanced management plan that
the chief engineer previously reviewed pursuant to subsection (a) and set
for hearing.
(d) Within 120 days of the conclusion of the final public hearing set
forth in subsections (b) and (c), the chief engineer shall issue an order of
decision:
(1) Accepting the local enhanced management plan as sufficient to
address any of the conditions set forth in subsections (a) through (d) of
K.S.A. 82a-1036, and amendments thereto;
(2) rejecting the local enhanced management plan as insufficient to
address any of the conditions set forth in subsections (a) through (d) of
K.S.A. 82a-1036, and amendments thereto;
(3) returning the local enhanced management plan to the groundwater
management district, giving reasons for the return and providing the
district with the opportunity to resubmit a revised plan for public hearing
within 90 days of the return of the deficient plan; or
(4) returning the local enhanced management plan to the groundwater
management district and proposing modifications to the plan, based on
testimony at the hearing or hearings, that will improve the administration
of the plan, but will not impose reductions in groundwater withdrawals
that exceed those contained in the plan. If the groundwater management
district approves of the modifications proposed by the chief engineer, the
district shall notify the chief engineer within 90 days of receipt of return of
the plan. Upon receipt of the groundwater management district’s approval
of the modifications, the chief engineer shall accept the modified local
management plan. If the groundwater management district does not
approve of the modifications proposed by the chief engineer, the local
management plan shall not be accepted.
(e) In any case where the chief engineer issues an order of decision
accepting the local enhanced management plan pursuant to subsection (d),
the chief engineer, within a reasonable time, shall issue an order of
designation that designates the area in question as a local enhanced
management area.
(f) The order of designation shall define the boundaries of the local enhanced management area and shall indicate the circumstances upon which the findings of the chief engineer are made. The order of designation may include any of the following corrective control provisions set forth in the local enhanced management plan:

1. Closing the local enhanced management area to any further appropriation of groundwater. In which event, the chief engineer shall thereafter refuse to accept any application for a permit to appropriate groundwater located within such area;

2. Determining the permissible total withdrawal of groundwater in the local enhanced management area each day, month or year, and, insofar as may be reasonably done, the chief engineer shall apportion such permissible total withdrawal among the valid groundwater right holders in such area in accordance with the relative dates of priority of such rights;

3. Reducing the permissible withdrawal of groundwater by any one or more appropriators thereof, or by wells in the local enhanced management area;

4. Requiring and specifying a system of rotation of groundwater use in the local enhanced management area; or

5. Any other provisions making such additional requirements as are necessary to protect the public interest.

The chief engineer is hereby authorized to delegate the enforcement of any corrective control provisions ordered for a local enhanced management area to the groundwater management district in which that area is located, upon written request by the district.

(g) The order of designation shall follow, insofar as may be reasonably done, the geographical boundaries recommended by the local enhanced management plan.

(h) Except as provided in subsection (f), the order of designation of a local enhanced management area shall be in full force and effect from the date of its entry in the records of the chief engineer’s office unless and until its operation shall be stayed by an appeal from an order entered on review of the chief engineer’s order pursuant to K.S.A. 2011 Supp. 82a-1901, and amendments thereto, and in accordance with the provisions of the Kansas judicial review act. The chief engineer upon request shall deliver a copy of such order to any interested person who is affected by such order and shall file a copy of the same with the register of deeds of any county within which any part of the local enhanced management area lies.

(i) If the holder of a groundwater right within the local enhanced management area applies for review of the order of designation pursuant to K.S.A. 2011 Supp. 82a-1901, and amendments thereto, the provisions of the order with respect to the inclusion of the holder’s water right within the
area may be stayed in accordance with the Kansas administrative
procedure act.

(j) Unless otherwise specified in the proposed enhanced management
plan and included in the order of designation, a public hearing to review
the designation of a local enhanced management area shall be conducted
by the chief engineer within seven years after the order of designation is
final. A subsequent review of the designation shall occur within 10 years
after the previous public review hearing or more frequently as determined
by the chief engineer. Upon the request of a petition signed by at least 10%
of the affected water users in a local enhanced management area, a public
review hearing to review the designation shall be conducted by the chief
engineer. This requested public review hearing shall not be conducted
more frequently than every four years. The cost of public review
hearings under this subsection may be paid by the local enhanced
management area.

(k) The chief engineer shall adopt rules and regulations to effectuate
and administer the provisions of this section.

(l) The provisions of this section shall be part of and supplemental to
the provisions of K.S.A. 82a-1020 through K.S.A. 82a-1040, and
amendments thereto.

Sec. 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its
publication in the Kansas register.