

To the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources,

Water is our most important resource. Without it no one could survive. In South Central Kansas we have a priceless treasure in the Equus Beds. Groundwater Management District 2 works nearly non-stop to see that proper management, protection and conservation of the Equus Beds is done efficiently. Other Groundwater Management Districts in Kansas are committed to doing the same.

Each GMD has a board that helps make decisions to best serve everyone in their district. They know best what answers to give when someone has a groundwater issue. Recently, GMD2 had to tell a municipal user "NO!" when they requested being able to use more water from the Equus Beds during times of drought. The City of Wichita was only thinking of themselves as their proposal would put many, many people who live above and rely on the Equus Beds for their livelihood, in danger of having wells go dry. Wichita knows they will impact wells in Sedgwick and Harvey County. They didn't seem to care. They are now trying to get their way by having two bills, SB548 and SB549, run through the legislature in such a hurry that fewer people will know about them and not be able to let the Committee know their thoughts, good or bad.

Many people and entities such as Kansas Livestock Association, Kansas Farm Bureau and Kansas Corn, along with GMD2, objected to the proposal made by the City of Wichita. Connie Owen, Presiding Officer of the nearly two years worth of hearings, denied their proposal to gain additional water rights. The City of Wichita did not prove their case, which was full of inaccurate facts and statements.

The Kansas Water Vision is "Kansans act on a shared commitment to have the water resources necessary to support the state's social, economic and natural resource needs for current and future generations." These two bills do not coincide with this Vision. The GMD Act states that there is a very real need for special districts to properly manage groundwater resources. If they are allowed to only regulate irrigators, the Vision will be lost. GMDs need to manage ALL groundwater resources which include irrigation, municipalities, domestic and livestock wells. That is the only way they can properly manage the groundwater in their areas. Water rights were over appropriated in the GMD2 area many years ago, before regulations were passed. Farmers who have requested to add to their water rights have been denied their requests since the 1980s.

To have GMD2 attacked by a municipality out of spite and greed wastes time and money that could be used elsewhere. These bills were creatively thought up by consultants who were hired by Wichita so they could have their way! They are mad that their ASR proposal was shot down and this is a desperate attempt to overcome what they were denied by Connie Owen's decision! The City of Wichita sells the Equus Beds' water they pump already and makes money off the water rights they already have. The people fighting against them being able to get additional water rights are using the Equus Beds water to survive; for their homes, to water livestock and to irrigate their ground.

Water quality and quantity needs to be preserved for future generations. The GMDs have people that are passionate about this and who keep a close eye on what is happening. Please do not let these bills get approved by this Committee.

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