

Chairman Highland and members of the House Water Committee, my name is Randy Hayzlett. I am a farmer/rancher in Kearny County, Kansas. Forty-nine years ago, on January 15th I left college and became actively engaged in farming and raising cattle. During that time, I have witnessed many changes in production agriculture, several of which were with irrigated agriculture.

I am here today to express my opposition to HB 2686. This bill, if passed, will impose a tax on water right owners, has potential to have dominating infringements on those rights as provided in the Kansas Water Appropriation Act of June 28, 1945 and last but not least it could easily make the use of water a political football, even more so than it is today.

As it has been for many years, the Groundwater Management Act has functioned as it was designed to operate. The design of allowing local water users and water managers to make good decisions regarding water and its use, that are not in conflict with state statutes and agency rules and regulations, has been the foundation that the GMDs have operated on for decades. To make the changes suggested in this bill to the Ground Water Management Districts, simply put, is flat out wrong.

For years I have heard several people refer to the Chief Engineer as a water Czar. Personally, I have never felt that way in regards to that position, however with the wording of Section 2 of this bill, I am more inclined to think this could be a top down dictatorial over reach by the State.

A new water right owner tax at a time when Kansas farmers are dealing with outrageous increases in production cost, difficulties if not impossible ability to purchase repairs and equipment, challenges in hiring workers and rapidly rising fuel cost is not something that legislation should be imposing on the state's farmers at this time. The thought of one farmer-one water right is not overwhelming, however it is more common that a farmer or farm family will have multiple rights and the cost would be significant at that time.

Over the years I have served and still do serve my great state of Kansas on several water related boards and committees. I most certainly support the state water plan fund (SWPF) and its use for needed water projects to make our state a better place. For years the SWPF has not been funded as provided for by statute and that is part of the reason we are having this discussion today, however creating more bureaucracy, imposing targeted taxes on our farming community and making changes to a well-functioning water board is not the answer.

Thank you for allowing me to present this testimony.