

**Neutral Testimony for House Bill 2697
to the House Committee on Water
by Lane P. Letourneau, P.G.
Kansas Department of Agriculture
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Good morning, Chairman Minnix and members of the committee. My name is Lane Letourneau and I serve as the Water Appropriation Program Manager for the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Water Resources.

I am standing before you today to provide neutral testimony for House Bill 2697.

As currently written, HB 2697 would modify K.S.A. 82a-1028, the provision of the Groundwater Management District Act K.S.A. 82a-1028 that currently provides that groundwater management districts shall have the power to provide advice and assistance in the management of drainage problems, storage, groundwater recharge, surface water management, and all other appropriate matters of concern to the district. Under the proposed amendment, the statute would provide that groundwater management districts can provide "relevant information" related to those items rather than "advice and assistance."

We believe that this would take considerable pressure off the districts while still ensuring local input is provided for. We also believe this will eliminate the possibility for friction that could occur if a district provides "advice or assistance" that is not consistent with state law or that the Chief Engineer otherwise does not wish to implement in light of K.S.A. 82a-82a-1039, another provision of the Groundwater Management District Act, which reads: "...Nothing in this act shall be construed as limiting or affecting any duty or power of the chief engineer granted pursuant to the Kansas water appropriation act." If a district only provides relevant information but does not have to advise DWR what to do with that information, there is much less room for the friction that could arise as a result of the tension between the two provisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I will stand for questions.