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To: House Committee on Water, Representative Jim Minnix, Chairman

From: Kent Askren, Public Policy Director for Kansas Farm Bureau

Date: February 20, 2024

Re: Written testimony in opposition to HB 2695

Chairman Minnix and members of the Committee, on behalf of Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to HB 2695. KFB is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 30,000 farm and ranch families through our 105 county Farm Bureau associations.

Within the Groundwater Management District Act (**GMDA**) authority is given the chief engineer to approve a petition that includes lands comprising a "**hydrologic community of interest**", statement of purpose in conformity with the act, district boundaries that overlie an aquifer or aquifers subject to management, the area of the district is sufficient to support a groundwater management program and the public interest is served.

If approved, HB 2695 could undermine the GMDA by **creating checkerboard district boundaries** therefore making management of the aquifer, which has no political or ownership boundaries, nearly impossible.

We urge the committee to dig deeper into the root issues bringing this bill forward. Keep in mind, eligible voters elect GMD board of directors to represent them. If it is the consensus of the eligible voters to add or remove a portion of the district from the district boundaries, the act provides provisions to do so.

By GMDA definition, "District" means a **contiguous area which overlies one or more aquifers**, together with any area in between, which is organized for groundwater management purposes...." KFB policy supports the GMDA and its fundamental principles. We all agree, we can do better but **HB 2695 threatens to unwind the provisions and purpose of the act** to aid in the proper management of the groundwater resources.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and we ask that the committee reject and not pass out HB 2695.