

2023 Kansas Statutes

82a-718. Abandonment of water rights; notices; hearing; review of action; exceptions. (a) All appropriations of water must be for some beneficial purpose. Every water right of every kind shall be deemed abandoned and shall terminate when without due and sufficient cause no lawful, beneficial use is henceforth made of water under such right for five successive years. Before any water right shall be declared abandoned and terminated the chief engineer shall conduct a hearing thereon. Notice shall be served on the user at least 30 days before the date of the hearing. The determination of the chief engineer pursuant to this section shall be subject to review in accordance with the provisions of K.S.A. 82a-1901, and amendments thereto.

The verified report of the chief engineer or such engineer's authorized representative shall be prima facie evidence of the abandonment and termination of any water right.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (e), when no lawful, beneficial use of water under a water right has been reported for three successive years, the chief engineer shall notify the user, by certified mail, return receipt requested, that: (1) No lawful, beneficial use of the water has been reported for three successive years; (2) if no lawful, beneficial use is made of the water for five successive years, the right may be terminated; and (3) the right will not be terminated if the user shows that for one or more of the five consecutive years the beneficial use of the water was prevented or made unnecessary by circumstances that are due and sufficient cause for nonuse, which circumstances shall be included in the notice.

(c) The provisions of subsection (a) shall not apply to a water right that has not been declared abandoned and terminated before the effective date of this act if the five years of successive nonuse occurred exclusively and entirely before January 1, 1990. However, the provisions of subsection (a) shall apply if the period of five successive years of nonuse began before January 1, 1990, and continued after that date.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a), an eligible water right enrolled in and continually in compliance with the water rights conservation program, pursuant to K.S.A. 82a-741, and amendments thereto, shall be deemed to have due and sufficient cause for nonuse and shall not be deemed abandoned.

(e) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a), a groundwater right, which has as its local supply an aquifer area that has been closed to new appropriations by rule, regulation or order of the chief engineer shall be deemed to have due and sufficient cause for nonuse and shall not be deemed abandoned.

History: L. 1945, ch. 390, § 19; L. 1957, ch. 539, § 23; L. 1988, ch. 356, § 350; L. 1999, ch. 122, § 1; L. 1999, ch. 149, § 13; L. 2010, ch. 59, § 1; L. 2011, ch. 89, § 26; L. 2012, ch. 6, § 1; July 1.