

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Joann Freeborn at 3:30 p.m. on February 6, 2001 in Room 231-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Mary Ann Graham, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Brownie Wilson, Environmental Scientist, Kansas Water Office,
901 S. Kansas, Topeka, KS 66612-1249
Susan Stover, Environmental Scientist, Kansas Water Office,
901 S. Kansas, Topeka, KS 66612-1249
Al LeDoux, Director, Kansas Water Office, 901 S. Kansas,
Topeka, KS 66612-1249
Lee Allison, Phd. RG., Director, Kansas Geological Survey,
1930 Constant Avenue, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS
66047-3726
Clint Riley, Department Attorney, Department Wildlife and
Parks, 900 SW Jackson, Ste 502, Topeka, KS 66612-1233
Steven Frost, Exec. Director, SW Kansas Groundwater
Management District, 409 Campus Drive, Ste 106, Garden City,
KS 67846
Kristen Hanna, Volunteer, Sierra Club, Kansas Chapter, 2417
SW Harrison, Topeka, KS 66604
Greg Krissek, Kansas Corn Growers Association, PO Box 446,
Garnett, KS 66032-0446

Others attending: See Attached Sheet

Chairperson Joann Freeborn called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. She announced that she may add another bill hearing to the committee agenda for Thursday, February 8, 2001. She welcomed the staff of the Kansas Water Office.

Brownie Wilson, KWO, was welcomed to the committee. He briefed the committee on The High Plains Aquifer by displaying maps with the use of overhead slides. The assessment of the Kansas High Plains Aquifer was undertaken as part of several mandates directed to the Kansas Water Authority from **House Substitute for SB287**, which was passed in 1999. The report on Aquifer Resources was the primary topic for the presentation. The aquifer resources report focuses on the High Plains Aquifer in Kansas. Although there are other aquifer units in Kansas, the High Plains Aquifer represents the most heavily utilized aquifer system in the state and represents the primary source of water for most of western and south central Kansas. A map showing saturated thickness was displayed. Saturated Thickness is the vertical thickness of a hydrogeologically defined aquifer in which the pore spaces are filled (saturated) with water. Saturated Thickness is commonly used as an indicator of the amount of available water and its rate of change. Other maps showing Estimated Predevelopment and Current Saturated Thickness in Feet; Estimated Change in Saturated Thickness from Predevelopment to Current; Estimated Annual Ground-water Recharge (Inches per Year); Maximum Authorized Quantity and Average Percent Reported Used in Acre-Feet; Total Reported Water Used and Seasonal Precipitation (March to October) from 1990 to 1998; Estimated Usable Lifetime for Large Volume Pumping; and Changes in Water Use Necessary to Meet Sustainability or Safe Yield, were displayed and discussed. (See attachment 1)

Susan Stover, KWO, was welcomed to the committee. She briefed the committee on the Ogallala Management

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Concept. The Kansas Water Authority recently reviewed a new idea for managing the Ogallala Aquifer. This idea, the “two pools” management of the Ogallala, would address the rate of groundwater depletion, provide time for transition to a reduced water use, protect some ground water for future generations, and have management decisions made on local aquifer conditions. This idea developed out of discussions between the Kansas Water office, the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources, the Kansas Geological Survey and the western Groundwater Management Districts. The Kansas Water Authority agreed this idea deserved further discussion and directed the Kansas Water Office and the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources, to present this new management idea at stakeholder and public meetings in western Kansas to get their input. Maps were shown of the Ogallala portion of the High Plains Aquifer with the use of overhead slides. Other maps showing Low Recharge Potential for the Ogallala Aquifer; Two Pools Approach for Aquifer Management; Estimated usable lifetime for large volume pumping from the High Plains Aquifer; and Water Resource Organizations, were displayed and discussed. (See attachment 2) Questions and discussion followed.

Lee Allison, State Geologist and Director of Kansas Geological Survey, was welcomed to the committee. He briefed the committee on Science Needs For Managing The High Plains Aquifer. The Survey has a mission in state statute to make complete surveys of the state for natural resources of economic importance, including groundwater. The Survey is administratively housed at the University of Kansas. The High Plains Aquifer is actually a collection of geological units that includes the Ogallala Aquifer in western Kansas. The KGS has been carrying out a comprehensive research and monitoring program on the High Plains aquifer for many years in cooperation with a variety of state and local agencies. For more than 30 years the KGS along with the Division of Water Resources has measured water well levels in more than 1400 wells across western Kansas. This comprehensive database is a critical resource in understanding the distribution and amount of depletion in the aquifer. (See attachment 3) In June 2000, the geological surveys of the eight states that contain the High Plains aquifer formed the High Plains Aquifer Coalition, in alliance with the U.S. Geological Survey. The purpose of the Coalition is to cooperate in joint investigations and scientific exchanges concerning the earth sciences (including hydrology, geology, geochemistry, geochronology, geophysics, geotechnical and geological engineering and related investigations) on topics of mutual interest. (See attachment 4) Committee discussion and questions followed.

Chairperson Freeborn thanked the Kansas Water Office staff and Mr. Allison for their presentations. She opened the hearing on **HB2042**.

HB2042: An act concerning hunting.

Clint Riley, Department Attorney, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, was welcomed to the committee. He testified before the committee in support of the bill which would require that all nonresidents born after July 1, 1957 carry proof of completion of hunter education while hunting in Kansas. This bill was part of the department’s legislative package, and is supported by the department. The hunter education program established by the Legislature in 1973 has been credited with improving hunting safety and decreasing accidents throughout the state. This bill would not require anyone to take hunter education who is not already required to do so, and the department does not believe it would be a substantial burden on the hunting public. (See attachment 5) Questions and discussion followed.

The Chairperson asked if any others wished to testify, no one came forward. She closed the hearing on **HB2042** and opened the hearing on **HCR5009**.

HCR5009: A concurrent resolution urging the Congress of the United States to address the conservation and preservation of the High Plains Aquifer.

Al LeDoux, Director, Kansas Water Office, was welcomed and testified in support of the resolution. He was appearing before the committee as the Secretary of the Kansas Water Authority, which requested introduction of this resolution. The Kansas Water Authority approved the Kansas Water Plan in July of 2000. The Kansas Water Plan contained a recommendation for the Director of the Kansas Water Office to develop recommendations on actions the federal government should take to conserve the High Plains Aquifer. As a result of that recommendation

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Mr. LeDoux formed an ad hoc committee, which developed the committee report that is attached to his testimony, also attached are copies of letters Governor Graves sent the Kansas congressional delegation. (See attachment 6) Mr. LeDoux introduced members of the Kansas Water Authority present in today's meeting; Cliff Mayo, Chairman; David Pope, Kansas Department of Agriculture/Division of Water Resources; and Dr. Lee Allison, Director, Kansas Geological Survey. Also Rep. Dennis McKinney is a member as well.

Steven Frost, Executive Director, SW Kansas Groundwater Management District #3, was welcomed to the committee. The Board of Directors respectfully request the committee's most serious consideration for support of this concurrent resolution regarding the High Plains Aquifer and are certain to agree that the physiographic impact of this unique water resource in our nations economy, culture, and environment is not sufficiently recognized and is under-appreciated. They feel it is extremely important to educate, plan, and provide for the long term productivity of the High Plains Aquifer and its associated impacts to local, state, and national economies. (See attachment 7)

Kristen Hanna, Volunteer, Sierra Club, Kansas Chapter, was welcomed to the committee. She testified in support of the resolution. The Sierra Club recognizes the potential dangers of the depletion of our aquifers and are concerned with their preservation. They applaud the Kansas legislature and the administration for investigating this situation and generating potential remedies. The Sierra Club also supports this committee and the legislature in coordinating with other high plains states and the federal government to spur action on this matter. (See attachment 8)

Greb Krissek, Director, Kansas Corn Growers Association, was welcomed. He appeared before the committee in a neutral position to the resolution. The Kansas Corn Growers and the Kansas Grain Sorghum Producers Associations believe information about new efforts to discuss and plan for the future of the Ogallala portion of the High Plains Aquifer is just unfolding and are concerned that legislative action prior to all stakeholders having an opportunity to study and review these new proposals may be premature. (See attachment 9) Committee discussion and questions followed.

Chairperson Freeborn asked if there were other comments or questions concerning the resolution. There were none. She closed the hearing on **HCR5009**. She reviewed the committee agenda for Thursday, February 8.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 8, 2001.