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**Testimony on SB156 to
The House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
By Lane Letourneau, PG
Kansas Department of Agriculture
March 16, 2015**

Good afternoon, Chairman Schwartz, and members of the committee. I am Lane Letourneau, with the Kansas Department of Agriculture. Today KDA would like to present testimony today that is neutral in regards to SB 156.

This bill authorizes expenditures from the Arkansas River gaging fund to pay for groundwater monitoring sites in the Arkansas River basin, but limits such expenditures to groundwater monitoring sites along the Kansas state border. The bill places such groundwater monitoring at the same funding priority level as the surface water gaging stations that the fund is currently paying for, which are used to manage the river under the Colorado-Kansas Arkansas River Compact, stepping away from the clear priority ranking set forth in K.S.A. 74-5,133 and introducing ambiguity to the process of determining which efforts to fund when there isn't enough to fund everything.

Limiting the funding for groundwater monitoring sites to locations along the Kansas state border seems unhelpful to the agency's overarching efforts to focus data collection resources where they are most needed and the limitation seems unnecessarily provocative to our neighboring states of Colorado and Oklahoma with which we have interstate river compacts. One of the strategies identified in the Kansas' 50-Year Vision for the Future of Water in Kansas is to "Improve interstate cooperation so that Kansans' water needs are met and protected." We believe that such explicit statutory language appears unnecessarily distrustful and is counter to this strategy.

In the end, the Arkansas River gaging fund is administered by the agency and we will continue to administer it to serve the best interests of the State of Kansas.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.