

**To:** Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Sen. Larry Powell, Chair

**From:** Justin Vosburgh on behalf of Kansas Farm Bureau

**Date:** January 29, 2015

**Re:** **SB 52-** an act concerning water; related to the diversion of water

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Chairman Powell and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 52. I am Justin Vosburgh, I farm, live and have irrigated land in Stafford County. I am testifying on behalf of the Kansas Farm Bureau.

Water is vital to life and crop irrigation helps reduce the volatile impacts of unpredictable Kansas weather. The Rattlesnake Creek drainage basin has a well-established irrigation base and is a highly productive agricultural region. Our farms, communities and the entire state benefit from this use of water.

Because water isn't always plentiful in Kansas, water rights are established to develop and protect the right to use water based upon the concept of "1<sup>st</sup> in time is 1<sup>st</sup> in right." Strict adherence to this concept isn't always the best solution; therefore, the proposal in SB 52 to allow the chief engineer to use augmentation if necessary is a good one.

Given the limited experience we have with using augmentation to help satisfy water right disputes, we believe it may be best to initially focus the use of this tool and to encourage the committee to amend the bill and target augmentation to the Rattlesnake Creek basin.

Irrigation is vital to my farming operation. The option of augmentation to minimize severe financial losses caused by water shortages is good for everyone in the Rattlesnake Creek basin. I hope the committee will amend and pass SB 52 and allow the chief engineer the option to use augmentation as a targeted tool in our basin if necessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I'd be glad to answer any questions at the appropriate time.