

Scope Statement

Water-Related Agencies: Determining Whether the State Could Achieve Efficiencies and Reduce Costs by Combining the Operations of Its Water-Related Agencies

Several State agencies have primary roles in helping maintain the State's water resources. Those agencies include the Kansas Water Office, the Kansas Water Authority, the Department of Agriculture's Division of Water Resources, and the Kansas Conservation Commission. Other agencies, such as the Department of Wildlife and Parks and the Department of Health and Environment, have water-related responsibilities as well.

An audit we issued in 1994 looked at issues related to duplication of services of the Kansas Water Office and the Division of Water Resources. The audit found that while those agencies worked on some of the same programs, their activities overlapped in only a few areas and the agencies had developed agreements and processes that minimized the possibility of duplication of effort. Further, a 1996 audit reported that the Conservation Commission's programs could be transferred to another State agency, but there was no compelling reason to do so.

Over the years, legislative concerns have been raised about whether Kansas would benefit by combining and consolidating activities related to water management and regulation into a single agency. A performance audit of this topic would answer the following questions.

1. **Could Kansas achieve greater operating efficiencies and reduce costs by consolidating the duties and responsibilities pertaining to water regulation and management into a single agency?** To answer this question, we would identify the roles and responsibilities that various State agencies have pertaining to water regulation and management. We would look for areas where duplication or overlap of services might exist. We would look at how other states have structured their water management and regulatory functions. We would interview State officials and survey officials from other units of government, such as cities and groundwater management districts, to get their opinions about combining various parts of different State agencies into a single agency. Using this information, we would assess the pros and cons of creating a single water-management agency, and would identify the activities that should be brought into a new agency. We would also develop a prototype for how a new agency could be structured, and would estimate the overall savings the State might achieve through such an action.

Estimated time to complete: 18 to 22 weeks