

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE WATER COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ron Highland at 9:00 am on Wednesday, January 27, 2021, in room 152-S of the Capitol.

All members were present

Committee staff present:

Chris Waggoner, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Damien Gilbert, Committee Assistant
Meredith Fry, Legislative Research Department
Victoria Potts, Legislative Research Department
Zach Fridell, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Earl Lewis, Chief Engineer - Division of Water Resources, Kansas Department of Agriculture

Others in attendance:

No list available

Request for bill introductions

Rep. Highland moved to introduce a bill dealing with flex accounts for multi-year irrigation compacts. There being no objections, the bill was introduced.

Informational hearing: Division of Water Resources, Kansas Department of Agriculture (Earl Lewis, Chief Engineer)

Earl Lewis introduced himself and his job ([Attachment 1](#)), then began providing a presentation on the duties and structure of the Department of Water Resources ([Attachment 2](#)). The DWR administers 30 laws and responsibilities including the Kansas Water Appropriation Act, which governs how water is allocated and used; statutes regulating the construction of dams, levees and other changes to streams; the state's four interstate river compacts; and coordinates the National Flood Insurance Program in Kansas.

Chairman Highland requested FTEs from the agency to round out the information. He then asked whether the damming of streams to recharge the Ogallala Aquifer would go through DWA. Lewis answered yes.

Lewis then fielded questions from the committee, including the threshold where someone would have to apply for a permit to construct a dam or make a change to a water structure is, if uranium pollution would be discussed in water compact discussions with Colorado, what court a water transfer decision would be made in, whether switching to proactive protection from reactive protection was worth exploring, how people sign up for a LEMA, and others.

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES of the Committee on Water at 9:00 am on Wednesday, January 27, 2021, in room 152-S of the Capitol.

There being no further questions, Chairperson Highland adjourned the meeting at 10:20am.