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Chairman Jim Minnix
House Water Committee
Re: HB 2279

Dear Chairman Minnix and the House Water Committee

My name is Kirk Heger I am a board member of the Southwest Kansas Irrigation Association (SWKIA). The SWKIA is a trade association based around the irrigation industry in South West and South Central Kansas. The SWKIA was one of the very first water management and conservation minded organization to form in Kansas. Our first year was 1956. We have been involved in every major water management discussion since that time.

Today we are writing to voice our opposition to HB 2279. We believe strong communication between the GMD's and the Legislature is crucial. We do agree that annual reports would be beneficial to everyone and the collaboration between all groups, agencies, and the Legislature must be maintained.

Some of the language in HB 2279 is troubling however. The GMD's have been very proactive in developing and supporting good science to help us all understand the Aquifer and how it might respond to different influences. This information has been delivered to their membership and processed by each individual stakeholder and property right owner.

No coercion should be applied to a property right holder. Consequently, the language related to the Chief Engineer upon their individual perspective should not be allowed to summarily enter into the boundaries of a GMD and exert their position. Even the IGUCA statue requires the Chief to be invited into the District or have received a petition from stakeholders in the District.

Let us work together to create solutions to our state's water issues, not against one another by binding our hands. Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony.