

**Equus Beds Groundwater Management District No. 2
Testimony Concerning House Bill 2697
House Committee on Water**

**by
Tim Boese, Manager
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On behalf of the Equus Beds Groundwater Management District No. 2 (GMD2), I wish to thank Chairman Minnix and members of the Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony opposing House Bill 2697.

Although House Bill 2697 only proposes one real change to the Groundwater Management District Act statute K.S.A. 82a-1028, the change is a significant erosion of the GMD2's powers by changing the ability of a groundwater management district to provide "advice and assistance" regarding groundwater management and other appropriate matters, to just providing "relevant information".

The Oxford Languages Dictionary defines "advice" as "guidance or recommendations offered with regard to prudent future action" and defines "assistance" as "the action of helping someone with a job or task." This is exactly what GMD2 does – provides advice and assistance to several local, state and federal agencies, as well as GMD2 water users, landowners, and the general public. In doing so, GMD2 does indeed use relevant information to review, make recommendations, and provide advice and assistance on all sorts of various groundwater management and other appropriate matters. To change the groundwater management district's ability to provide only "relevant information" removes the necessary and obvious next steps to provide advice and assistance based on that relevant information.

GMD2 has several rules and regulations through the Division of Water Resources (DWR), the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), and the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC), to address many groundwater management issues. GMD2 provides much more than just relevant information, rather GMD2 does exactly what it is charged with pursuant to the Groundwater Management District Act – it manages the Equus Beds Aquifer. No other state or local agency is charged with groundwater management. "Management" is defined as "the process of dealing with or controlling things or people." Clearly, to properly manage the Equus Beds Aquifer, GMD2 must play a more important role than just merely providing "relevant information." For examples, pursuant to DWR/GMD2 regulations K.A.R. 5-22-1 through 5-22-17, GMD2 reviews water permit applications (change and new) and provides recommendations to DWR, and GMD2 requires and ensures water meters are installed properly; GMD2 requires and ensures abandoned wells are plugged properly and inactive wells constructed properly pursuant to KDHE/GMD2 regulations K.A.R. 28-30-200 through 28-30-207; and GMD2 permits and ensures cathodic protection boreholes are properly constructed pursuant to KCC/GMD2 regulations K.A.R. 82-3-700 through 82-3-710. GMD2 also has numerous programs and activities that revolve around providing advice and assistance to district members and the public, including assisting plugging abandoned wells, selling and repairing water meters, and assisting completing water permit applications and various forms.

The proposed change to House Bill 2697 is also inconsistent with the requirements specified in House Bill 2279 that was passed last year. HB 2279 requires GMDs to establish priority areas of concern and develop action plans to address the areas' groundwater issues. Surely this requirement takes much more action by the GMDs than just providing "relevant information." In fact, the requirements of HB 2279 imply that powers of GMDs should be expanded rather than diminished.

In summary, the Equus Beds Groundwater Management District No. 2 opposes any erosion of GMD powers and the ability to properly manage the Equus Beds Aquifer, and therefore strongly opposes HB 2697, as it would create poor policy and unnecessarily restrict GMD2 in carrying out its duties. Thank you, Chairman Minnix and Committee members, for the opportunity to testify in opposition to HB 2697 and the district urges the Committee members to not pass HB 2697.