



The Kansas Groundwater Management Districts

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Proponent Testimony on HB 2451 before the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee

Sean Miller
Kansas Groundwater Management Districts (GMD's)
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Chairman Powell, members of the committee, my name is Sean Miller and I appear today on behalf of all five Kansas Groundwater Management Districts in support of HB 2451.

Throughout the 20th Century, Kansas water law encouraged development and utilization of the available water resource in an attempt to maximize the economic value of the water. The “use it or lose it” provisions of the law ensured that water users, primarily agricultural producers, actively used their water rights or face the possibility of abandonment proceedings. The law was effective in developing the resource but it also created a culture of “use.” This culture and the use it or lose it provisions of the water appropriations act, ingrained in water users the need to pump in order to protect their water right.

This summer, as Governor Brownback convened meetings to develop a plan to extend the usable life of the Ogallala Aquifer, the discussion focused on the shift from a culture of use, to a culture of conservation. HB 2451 helps foster this shift by protecting producers from the abandonment of their water right within areas closed to new appropriation. Knowing that they are not required to pump water every year provides users with the flexibility to plan for the future and make production decisions that help to extend the usable life of the aquifer.

We ask that you support HB 2451, and thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of all five Kansas GMDs.