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Good Morning Chairman Powell and members of the agriculture committee. My name is Derek Sawyer from McPherson, Kansas. My wife, Katie, and I own and operate our fourth-generation family farm where we grow dryland and irrigated corn, wheat, soybeans and milo. I also run a 300-head cow/calf operation and background approximately 2,000 feeder calves throughout the year. I am pleased to be here today to provide you with my perspective on Senate Bill 272.

In 2011, due to the extreme drought conditions, I enrolled three of my irrigation wells into Emergency two-year Drought Term permits. Without the opportunity to increase my water use, I would have, at best, had extreme yield declines, and at worst had complete crop failure of my crops in fields serviced by these wells. Even though we have had some moisture over the past few months, I find myself extremely vulnerable to the consequences of another hot, dry summer. McPherson County is still listed as being under a drought emergency by the Kansas Water Office. With an even smaller-than-average allotment of water available this year, I find myself being creative in my production practices just so I can bring home a crop under normal conditions, let alone if we see the drought persist.

I have followed with great interest the discussion about improving flex permits and allowing a more efficient use of our resources for those who applied for the emergency drought term permits. If this bill passes, I will likely take full advantage of these permits on my three wells. However, I need to make planting decisions soon. Even though we are roughly 60 days from the start of planting, choices of fertility and herbicide programs, plant population, plant variety, and which crop to plant in general are dependent on the amount of available water and they are being made today. Insurance companies are struggling with how to implement their irrigated versus dryland policies and the deadline for sign-up is looming. All of these decisions will dramatically affect my bottom line and a decrease in production will have a detrimental effect on my operation and the state of Kansas as a whole.

I fully understand that I made a choice last year to apply for emergency drought term permits, but I think it is time for Kansas to look at new ways for producers to more efficiently utilize the natural resource that it has available. Using the same amount of water over the long term, but applying it when it is truly needed will have a tremendous economic benefit for the state of Kansas and will help our producers hedge against extreme weather conditions. For these reasons I encourage you to quickly pass this bill. Thank you for your consideration. I will be happy to answer any questions.

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Attachment 9