

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, Senator Dan Kerschen, Chairman

From: Kent Askren, Kansas Farm Bureau

Date: January 31, 2018

Re: Written Testimony on SB 194- concerning water, relating to GMDs user charges

Chairman Kerschen and members of the Committee, on behalf of Kansas Farm Bureau I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments today in support of SB 194. KFB is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 30,000 farm and ranch families through our 105 county Farm Bureau associations.

KFB policy supports the Groundwater Management Districts (GMD) Act and the role local water users have in determining their own destiny. Through implementation of a management program, each GMD must address groundwater supply problems unique to their district.

In talking with GMD 2, we understand they have an amendment to offer which could increase the water user fee but not change the current land assessments. We support this amendment.

The proposal would give GMD boards greater latitude to fund their management programs by increasing their water user revenue "cap", if needed. Annually, the GMD board submits a proposed budget for eligible votes to consider at a public hearing, prior to adopting their budget.

Irrigation water right holders already pay significantly higher property taxes based in part upon the amount of water they apply each year. While we are not seeking to increase this heavy burden, we understand there may be times GMD boards need greater latitude to generate revenue after seeking public input from their constituencies. Our policy supports such grassroots efforts to help manage the resource.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and we hope you will vote to favorably pass out SB 194.