

AS Partnership
Stuart Beckman
3195 N Rd 110W
Menlo, Kansas 67753

Issue: HB 2686

I am a farmer, water right owner and user and a member of SD6 advisory committee and strongly oppose HB 2686 as currently written. I strongly support local efforts to extend the life of the high plains ogallala aquifer for current and future generations in NW Kansas. I feel that the local stakeholders took giant and meaningful strides to conserve our water by the creation of SD6 Lema. A program that is working very well. These actions allow local control in managing water level declines and the destiny of the communities that depend on the high plains ogallala aquifer.

I support creating the Department of Water and Environment if several issues are addressed in this bill. The most concerning is the GMD election procedure. GMD 4 strongly encourages all water users to be involved in local water issues and strongly believes every water user should be represented by the board of directors. However, the way the bill is written could allow for many and significant beneficial use types to not be represented on the board of directors. The language as proposed in HB 2686 would allow any registered voter to represent and potentially exclude representation of a critical beneficial use type for the region, specifically agricultural users. And the Legislature should not impose term limits on board directors because institutional knowledge of water right law and operations is extremely beneficial to stakeholders. Those veteran board members are a resource in water management and decision-making regarding water policy.

My last opposition is the proposed water right fee. GMDs currently assess water users and eligible voters within their respective district boundaries. The water right fee would be an additional fee on what stakeholders are already paying for water locally. I support a water right fee but not in GMD's that already assess a water right fee.

If changes to this bill were considered with the above points addressed I would be in support of the water bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stuart Beckman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stuart Beckman