



P.O. Box 254
Ulysses, Kansas 67880
Office: (620) 356-3021
Fax: (620) 356-2060
swkia@pjd.com

March 14, 2022

Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources
Chairman Dan Kerschen

Chairman Kerschen and Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Kirk Heger; I am the president of the Southwest Kansas Irrigation Association (SWKIA). Our association represents irrigators and businesses associated with the irrigation industry in Southwest Kansas. SWKIA stands in opposition to SB 548.

SB 548 attempts to stifle the purpose of Kansas GMDs by limiting their powers, purpose, and overall goals in Kansas water management. The bill would remove “all matters related to water rights” from the GMDs scope of management. The bill hopes to achieve this by weakening the relationship between GMDs and the Chief Engineer in addressing irrigation water use, a relationship that has allowed GMDs to make crucial recommendations to state stakeholders.

GMDs offer regional and oftentimes local solutions to Kansas water issues. GMDs not only give representation to stakeholders and water users, but are the chief advocates for conservation, storage, and cleanliness of our state’s most valuable resource. At a time when conversations about our state’s future water policy are necessary, the notion that limiting the powers of GMDs is not only false, but dangerous to the overall future of water usage.

SB 548 will diminish local control and halt all of the progress that GMDs have made in Kansas water policy over the past several decades. The needs and resources of each GMD is different and unique, making a one-size-fits-all approach to water policy inappropriate. However, this is exactly what this bill attempts to do.

We stand in support of the comments and testimony of our local GMDs and ask that you join us in opposition to this bill.

SWKIA strongly opposes SB 548. Please reach out if you have any questions.

Kirk Heger
Southwest Kansas Irrigation Association
620-544-1468
kirkheger@gmail.com