

**MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES BUDGET
COMMITTEE**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Sharon Schwartz at 1:30 pm. on January 26, 2011, in Room 142-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Christina Allen, Legislative Research Department
Tamera Lawrence, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Shirley Jepson, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Chris Wilson, Department of Agriculture
Lance Letourneau, Manager of the Appropriations Program, Division of Water Resources,
Department of Agriculture

Others attending:

See attached list.

Introduction of Legislation

Chris Wilson, Department of Agriculture, appeared before the Committee to request the introduction of legislation concerning funding for lodging inspections. Ms. Wilson indicated that funding was included in the 2010 appropriation bill through the use of a proviso. This legislation would put the issue in statute.

Representative Carlin moved to introduce legislation concerning fees for lodging inspections. The motion was seconded by Representative Lane. Motion adopted with no objections.

Representative Schwartz moved to introduce legislation relating to land acquisition by the Department of Wildlife and Parks (Attachment 1). The motion was seconded by Representative Powell. Motion carried on a voice vote.

The Committee discussed the possibility of changing the language in the proposed legislation regarding the 160 acres limitation to a lesser number. It was determined that the number could be amended if the bill has a hearing and the Committee chooses to do so.

Update on Water Meters

Lance Letourneau, Manager of the Appropriations Program, Division of Water Resources (DWR), Department of Agriculture, presented an update on Water Flowmeter Readings (Attachment 2). Mr. Letourneau reported that there are currently 24,110 metered water right points of diversion in the state. The Division is coordinating water readings with Groundwater Management Districts (GMD) to reach a goal of metering all non-domestic water diversions. As a result of a recent audit by Legislative Post Audit, Mr. Letourneau noted that the Division is implementing a one-year pilot project with Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to determine the feasibility of having KDHE read meters when they visit confined feeding facilities to avoid duplication services. Mr. Letourneau stated that DWR adheres to bio-security protocol when performing meter readings.

Responding to questions from the Committee, Mr. Letourneau provided the following information:

- Radio readings are currently limited because of the expense.
- Kansas statute requires every water user except domestic users to file water usage reports with the DWR, with penalties in place if the reports are not filed. Information in these reports is beneficial as a water management tool and ensures compliance with the law.
- Water-right owners are required to test meters for accuracy. GMD readers currently test meters which they read for accuracy.
- In responding to complaints or impairments, DWR has had a number of complaints during dry years. In responding to these complaints, the Division has established target water levels on wells; established a bypass from ponds to insure water downstream. Mr. Letourneau noted the importance of knowing the quantity of water needed for each livestock facility and irrigation

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system.

- The Water Appropriation Act determines priority in the distribution of water.
- During the pilot project with KDHE, KDHE will not require meters to be moved to meet bio-security protocol.
- The use of United States Geological Survey gauges to collect data on the flow of water into Western Kansas, has been discontinued because of budget cuts. The cost is approximately \$4,000 per gauge with 3 gauges in place. The Committee noted the importance of collecting this data to ensure that the State is getting their fair share of water from Colorado, especially for irrigation.

The Committee requested that DWR keep the Committee informed on progress in using radio readings to perform water meter readings and on the situation with the 3 U.S. Geological Survey gauges which collect data on water flowing into western Kansas. The Committee voiced concern that it is important to have uniformity between state agencies with regard to location and reading of water meters.

Distribution of Information

Christina Allen, Legislative Research Department, provided copies of a memo regarding Parsons Army Ammunition Plant Facility and Grounds Funding ([Attachment 3](#)). Ms. Allen informed the Committee that she has extensive information from the Department of Wildlife and Parks available to each Committee member on a “flash drive”. Members were requested to bring their laptops to the next Committee meeting to allow the information can be downloaded.

Adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled “on call of the chair”.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:13 pm.