

August 14, 2020

Re: Wichita County LEMA Initial Hearing

My name is Lane Letourneau. I am the water appropriation program manager for the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Water Resources.

As the agency that administers the Kansas Water Appropriation Act and other laws applicable to water management in Kansas, DWR wants to provide testimony in support of the request by Western Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 1 to initiate a Local Enhanced Management Area for Wichita County.

After our review of the proposed LEMA plan, we believe the plan and the conditions within the proposed LEMA support a favorable finding as to all three criteria established in K.S.A. 82a-1041(b). We believe the data provided by the Kansas Geological Survey shows groundwater level declines and groundwater withdrawals exceeding aquifer recharge within the proposed LEMA boundaries sufficient to designate the proposed LEMA, and we believe the geographic boundaries of the proposed LEMA are reasonable, as KGS data shows a decline in groundwater levels throughout GMD1.

Additionally, DWR feels that the creation of this LEMA within the proposed boundary serves the public interest of K.S.A. 82a-1020 as required. The plan was presented to the Acting Chief Engineer with the recommendation of the GMD1 Board of Directors, and, broadly speaking, DWR feels the elements of the proposed plan comport with basic state law and policy. We are also aware that there has been strong local support for this LEMA as well as ample opportunity for public involvement in this process.

DWR feels this plan establishes management goals that conserve water in the Ogallala aquifer. We want to continue working with our stakeholders to provide conservation tools that maximize both the usable life of the aquifer and economic security for Kansas water users, and we feel the approval of this LEMA plan would represent a positive step toward achieving that goal.