

November 20, 2020

Kansas Division of Water Resources
Wichita County Local Enhanced Management Area
Groundwater Management District #1
RE: Public Hearing #2

I would like to take this opportunity to submit testimony in support of the Chief Engineer finding that the proposed local enhanced management area (LEMA) will serve the public interest by implementing necessary corrective controls to conserve water for the sustainability and stabilization of the High Plains Aquifer.

Green Plains Cattle Company operates a large cattle feeding facility in Wichita county and across southwest Kansas. Our facility north of Leoti relies on the success of local farmers. Annually, our Leoti facility purchases 11.6 million bushels of corn, 120,000 tons of silage, and 1,600 tons of hay. 35% of the corn (4.2 million bushels) and all of the silage comes from within 30 miles of the feedyard. It is apparent the farming community supports the conservation practices outlined in the proposed LEMA because it will stabilize and prolong irrigation in the region. That result will benefit our business too.

Agriculture is the foundation of our western Kansas economy. That makes water the single most important natural resource in our region. Extending the useful life of the aquifer benefits us all. Success of this conservation project will ensure the viability of our local communities, from main street business to public schools for generations to come. It's an investment in the local economy that the agriculture community is willing to make.

Without successful farms in the area, our business will suffer. Not only do we rely on farm products produced in our region, we also rely on people. If the economy in the area suffers, they do too. We employ 70 people and our payroll is a significant indirect investment in the community.

We are a relatively small water user, and we cannot limit the amount of water the cattle in our facility consume. However, we have invested heavily in water management facilities over the last few years. These upgrades ensure we are not wasting water and allow us to better monitor and target areas for improvement.

In closing, stabilizing the High Plains Aquifer will ensure sustainability of local businesses and the economy ensuring future generations remain prosperous in the local area and remain here to support our local economy. It is apparent there is a need to act. The conservation plan outlined in the LEMA appears to have support from area farmers. We support the farmers and their plan to ensure water for future generations.

Mike Hunter
General Manager
Green Plains Cattle Company