

To: House Committee on Water

From: Miles A. Franz

Date: January 29, 2024

RE: HB 2459 Testimony

Testimony Summary

House Bill: 2459

Hearing Date/Time: February 1, 2024; 9am

Attestant: Miles Franz

Bill Stance: Opponent

Testimony: Oral

My name is Miles Franz, I own multiple businesses including a 3rd generation farming operation outside of Liberal, KS, but I am a Kansas Resident living in the Kansas City area. I am here representing myself, my tenant farmers, and the people of southwest Kansas.

For the record, my tenant farmers are:

- Chris Harper
- Steve Harper
- Ron Oliver
- Dale Stonestreet

I am very concerned with bill HB 2459 that is being discussed by the Committee on Water. I am particularly concerned with the catastrophic impact this could have on every small town in Southwest Kansas from Dodge City, west to the Colorado border and south to the Oklahoma border. Agricultural farming in the southwest is almost 100% dependent on irrigation and this bill puts that irrigation at risk, by putting the ability to maintain and redrill irrigation wells in the hands of individuals that live hundreds of miles away and are disconnected from the area. I think that this bill fails to connect the dots of just how important those farming operations are to the economies of those counties and towns, their residents, but also to our state and its tax base.

Pivot Irrigation Farming in the Southwest Supports the following for Kansas and its residents:

- Beef Processing Companies (largest employer in Liberal and two largest Dodge City)
 - Google Search: "Golden Triangle of Meat Packing"
- Ethanol Production Companies (3 producers that I am aware of in southwest Kansas)
- Statewide Food Supply (National Beef with locations in Dodge City and Liberal represent a major source of protein to the residents of Kansas)
- Local Farmers and their employees in Southwest Kansas (combined are probably the largest employers in the region)
- Agricultural Equipment Providers (Every John Deere/Heavy Equipment dealer in SW Kansas)
- Local tax bases and the services they provide

Extended Financial Impact:

- Kansas farmers currently compete with Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado and Nebraska farmers. Any impact to our irrigation capabilities in Kansas would give those states a competitive edge. Why would we as Kansans push business to our competition?
- **Most every farmer has a leveraged farm with the land as collateral. That collateral would be cut by roughly 90% on each piece of land where irrigation was no longer authorized. The result would leave 100s of banks and individual farms at risk, from both a cashflow and debt ratio standpoint.**
- **The property tax base would be significantly diminished as land values decreased and state income tax would be contracted in correlation to reduced crop production and sales.**

Although I live in Kansas City, I have a deep understanding of small towns, the benefits they provide, and the lack of support they get in return from those of us living in big cities. We have an opportunity to look out for those who provide for us.

For the benefit Kansas, I am requesting that this bill does not move forward.

I thank you all for your time and service, and I am always open to additional discussions.

Sincerely,



Miles A. Franz