



**Kansas Grain & Feed Association
Kansas Cooperative Council
Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association**

Senate Committee on Agriculture

Mar. 6, 2012

**HB 2517— Making the water right transition
assistance program (WTAP) permanent.**

Chairman Taddiken and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB 2517. The members of the Kansas Cooperative Council, Kansas Grain & Feed Association and Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Associations provide grain handling and crop inputs for farmers across the state. Thus, crop production is critical to their enterprises and the ability to sustain grain production across Kansas is important to all our members.

Adequate crop yields are essential to sustaining our member businesses, individual farms and rural communities. Many areas of our state rely on irrigation to provide enough water to grow crops. Our associations support conservation programs that allow continued agricultural production as a means of sustaining crop production and extending the life of precious groundwater supplies.

Our organizations supported the establishment of the water right transition assistance program as a pilot project when it was debated in 2006. We appear today in support of making this program permanent.

The permanent WTAP will retire rights based on “historic consumptive use” and only vested or certified rights in “good standing” will be eligible to enroll. We think these two components are important in ensuring that actual water is being saved. It is vitally important to our members that where government funds are being expended to reduce water use, that a “real” savings occurs.

We appreciate that the ability to retire a partial water right under the program will be subject to oversight via local groundwater district metering and monitoring. Again, this is important to ensure an actual saving of water. At the same time, we support the ability to continue irrigation of acres by another water right where law allows. Our associations have consistently advocated for water reduction programs that do not dictate, or prohibit, certain land uses. The fact that the WTAP allows for continued ag production is critical to our support of the program.

We also believe continuing to focus on targeted areas will maximize water reduction in certain areas, providing water saving benefits where they are needed most.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for this irrigation transition program. We respectfully encourage the committee to act favorably on this legislative proposal.



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