

Kansas Farm Bureau
WRITTEN POLICY STATEMENT

Senate Natural Resources Committee

Re: SB 153 an act concerning water, relating to dams

February 15, 2013

Submitted by:

Kent Askren

Assistant Director of Natural Resources

Chairperson Powell and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on SB 153. Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) has general policy supporting decreased regulatory burdens on agriculture producers and providing exemptions for normal farming activities and projects. The language found in SB 153 certainly seeks to reduce regulatory burdens which we support.

Reservoirs and streams are integral components to the agricultural landscape in Kansas. Adequately regulating the construction and maintenance of stream obstructions helps protect life and property but over-regulating these activities becomes a nuisance that creates financial hardship on many of our members.

We believe the proposals in SB 153 help to focus attention on what truly is the level of regulatory oversight that is needed in our stream obstruction law. Kansas has a stellar record in terms of how our dams have performed for decades to provide water supplies and reduce sediment entering our waterways. By broadening the criteria so that fewer dams are subject to regulation, we lift some of the unnecessary burden on dam owners while at the same time keeping the regulatory oversight on the truly large dams which are the greatest concern in the event of catastrophic failure.

As the committee considers SB 153 and listens to experts testify on the bill, we trust the right balance will be found in setting regulatory standards and protecting life and property. As we read the bill, Class A dams will be exempt from consent or permit of the chief engineer. We support this idea but believe county officials should be notified of the Class A dam location for their developmental planning purposes.

KFB appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 153.