

**82a-1030. Water user charges; annual assessment per acre against landowners; budget; collection by county officers; annual audit; no-fund warrants; limitation; protest petition; redemption of warrants.** (a) In order to finance the operations of the district, the board may assess an annual water user charge against every person who withdraws groundwater from within the boundaries of the district. The board shall base such charge upon the amount of groundwater allocated for such person's use pursuant to such person's water right. Such charge shall not exceed \$1 for each acre-foot (325,851 gallons) of groundwater withdrawn within the district or allocated by the water right, except that a groundwater management district may assess a greater annual water user charge not exceeding \$1.50 for each acre-foot of groundwater withdrawn within the district if more than 50% of the authorized place of use for such groundwater is outside the district. Whenever a person shows by the submission to the board of a verified claim and any supportive data which may be required by the board that such person's actual annual groundwater withdrawal is in a lesser amount than that allocated by the water right of such person, the board shall assess such annual charge against such person on the amount of water shown to be withdrawn by the verified claim. Any such claim shall be submitted by April 1 of the year in which such annual charge is to be assessed. The board may also make an annual assessment against each landowner of not to exceed \$.05 for each acre of land owned within the boundaries of the district. Special assessments may also be levied, as provided hereafter, against land specially benefited by a capital improvement without regard to the limits prescribed above.

(b) Before any assessment is made, or user charge imposed, the board shall submit the proposed budget for the ensuing year to the eligible voters of the district at a hearing called for that purpose by one publication in a newspaper or newspapers of general circulation within the district at least 28 days prior to the meeting. Following the hearing, the board shall, by resolution, adopt either the proposed budget or a modified budget and determine the amount of land assessment or user charge, or both, needed to support such budget.

(c) Both the user charges assessed for groundwater withdrawn and the assessments against lands within the district shall be certified to the proper county clerks and collected the same as other taxes in accordance with K.S.A. 79-1801, and amendments thereto, and the amount thereof shall attach to the real property involved as a lien in accordance with K.S.A. 79-1804, and amendments thereto. All moneys so collected shall be remitted by the county treasurer to the treasurer of the groundwater management district who shall deposit them to the credit of the general fund of the district. The accounts of each groundwater management district shall be audited annually by a public accountant or certified public accountant.

(d) Subsequent to the certification of approval of the organization of a district by the secretary of state and the election of a board of directors for such district, such board shall be authorized to issue no-fund warrants in amounts sufficient to meet the operating expenses of the district until money therefor becomes available pursuant to user charges or assessments under subsection (a). In no case shall the amount of any such issuance be in excess of 20% of the total amount of money receivable from assessments which could be levied in any one year as provided in subsection (a). No such warrants shall be issued until a resolution authorizing the same shall have been adopted by the board and published once in a newspaper having a general circulation in each county within the boundaries of the district. Whereupon such warrants may be issued unless a petition in opposition to the same, signed by not less than 10% of the eligible voters of such district and in no case by less than 20 of the eligible voters of such district, is filed with the county clerk of each of the counties in such district within 10 days following such publication. In the event such a petition is filed, it shall be the duty of the board of such district to submit the question to the eligible voters at an election called for such purpose. Such election shall be noticed and conducted as provided by K.S.A. 82a-1031, and amendments thereto.

Whenever no-fund warrants are issued under the authority of this subsection, the board of directors of such district shall make an assessment each year for three years in approximately equal installments for the purpose of paying such warrants and the interest thereon. All such assessments shall be in addition to all other assessments authorized or limited by law. Such warrants shall be issued, registered, redeemed and bear interest in the manner and in the form prescribed by K.S.A. 79-2940, and amendments thereto, except they shall not bear the notation required by such statute and may be issued without the approval of the state board of tax appeals. Any surplus existing after the redemption of such warrants shall be handled in the manner prescribed by K.S.A. 79-2940, and amendments thereto.

**History:** L. 1972, ch. 386, § 11; L. 1976, ch. 440, § 1; L. 1978, ch. 436, § 3; L. 2001, ch. 160, § 18; L. 2002, ch. 137, § 6; L. 2008, ch. 109, § 122; L. 2014, ch. 141, § 129; July 1.