

**Testimony in Opposition to HB 2726 to
The House Water and Environment Committee
By Susan Metzger
Kansas Department of Agriculture
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Chairman Sloan and members of the committee, I am Susan Metzger, a deputy secretary at the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA). I appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in opposition to HB 2726.

Increasing the adoption of less water-intensive crop varieties is a key strategy of the *Long-Term Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas*. Execution of this strategy has included such action items as collaborative sorghum research, ensuring crop insurance does not discourage the adoption of alternative crops, supporting pesticide products and seed varieties that improve opportunities for cotton growth, improving the adoptability of feed wheat, and other education and outreach efforts to encourage producers to consider low water-use crops in their rotation systems.

Across the Ogallala–High Plains aquifer in Kansas, producers are making changes to their planting selections as part of their water management strategies. For example, within the Sheridan County local enhanced management area (LEMA) there was more than a 400 percent increase in total irrigated grain sorghum and a 95 percent increase in irrigated wheat in the first five years of water use reductions. Cotton acres in Kansas increased 75 percent in 2016.

While there has been expressed interest in a cost-share program to defray the expense of irrigation efficiency technology, we have not heard a similar need for a cost-share program to incentivize the adoption of less water-intensive crop varieties. Crop selection has been driven by personal management choices and commodity prices. We recommend a continued focus on financial incentives towards technology adoption and not subsidizing crop selections.

HB 2726 creates the non-corn irrigation grant program and groups corn with other high water-use crops. It is important to note that through the adoption of soil moisture probes, efficient irrigation technology and drought tolerant seed varieties, many growers have demonstrated success in raising high-yielding corn with less than 15 inches of applied water.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.