

**NORTHWEST KANSAS GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT NO. 4**

**Shannon Kenyon, Executive Director/Manager**

**TESTIMONY OPPOSING SB 549**

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**ISSUE: SB 549**

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Groundwater Management Districts were locally formed by the public to address areas within a distinct boundary with a water problem. Groundwater Management Districts are then tasked with managing the water within their district by a board of directors. Anybody with a water right or that owns more than 40 contiguous acres is allowed to vote and be elected for a director position. This includes all water use types needed for a water right such as irrigation, municipal, stockwater, and industrial just to name a few of the prominent use types.

The Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District #4 (GMD 4) in Colby, Kansas assists all its water users in management of their water rights. Irrigation is the prominent use type; but by other use types being involved in GMD 4 we can provide assistance in leak detection for rural municipalities with little money for funding. We assist stockwater users in finding more water to convert for expansion. We also assist the oil and gas industry in locating existing wells for temporary permits.

SB 549 proposes for Groundwater Management Districts to allow for any use type, except for irrigation, to be able to exclude from a Groundwater Management District. GMD 4 manages all water, regardless of use type, within its boundaries because local stakeholders voted that it is needed. It was a local decision for good local water policy. Having everyone involved brings a sense of community and positive involvement in local water policy. Excluding any of those uses from management of the groundwater denotes importance of one of the other and separates community involvement and now solutions become problems.

GMD 4 opposes SB 548 because the water supply is for everyone that uses the water, not just irrigation. Local problems between water use types need to be handled at the local level, not at the state level.