



P.O. Box 254
Ulysses, Kansas 67880
Office: (620) 356-3021
Fax: (620) 356-2060
swkia@pjd.com

March 14, 2022

Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources
Chairman Dan Kerschen

Chairman Kerschen and Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Kirk Heger; I am the president of the Southwest Kansas Irrigation Association (SWKIA). Our association represents irrigators and businesses associated with the irrigation industry in Southwest Kansas. SWKIA stands in opposition to SB 549.

SB 549 attempts to weaken the oversight authority of local GMDs by allowing a non-irrigation water right holder to withdraw from a GMD and not be subject to the regulations of the chief engineer. These water right holders would also not be subject to GMD assessments, policies, and other local practices that GMDs impose.

There are multiple public interest arguments against this bill. By exempting certain members from the assessments and policies of the GMD, the legislature would be weakening local control, halting regional conservation efforts, and setting back decades of Kansas water progress.

SB 549 would also create confusion in local districts. GMD authority is explicitly provided in Kansas statute, and this bill is contradictory to the role that GMDs play in Kansas communities. Uniformity in practice in our regions is essential for continued progress for our state's water policy. Taking away the GMD's local control would only weaken water conservation efforts.

We stand in support of the comments and testimony of our local GMDs and ask that you join us in opposition to this bill.

SWKIA strongly opposes SB 549. Please reach out if you have any questions.

Kirk Heger
Southwest Kansas Irrigation Association
620-544-1468
kirkheger@gmail.com