

MINUTES OF THE SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Carolyn McGinn at 8:30 A.M. on January 27, 2005 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Lisa Montgomery, Revisor of Statutes Office

Gina Poertner, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

David Pope, Chief Engineer, Division of Water Resources, Kansas Department of Agriculture

Others attending:

See attached list.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson McGinn at 8:30 a.m. Sen. McGinn recognized David Pope of the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources, who presented an update on the status of interstate water litigation regarding river compacts (Attachment 1).

Sen. McGinn asked if the area in the Republican River area is primarily flood or pivot irrigation. Mr. Pope explained that it is primarily pivot irrigation. He went on to discuss the area where the basin crosses the state line in the northwest part of the state is part of the High Plains Aquifer and the Ogallala system, that most of the irrigation is from groundwater and pivot. The Chair then followed this question by asking if water rights are still given out, even with the limitations placed on acre-feet. Mr. Pope said that in the northwest part of Kansas, the tributary systems were closed about 20 years ago. However, the upland area in the Ogallala was treated differently and allowed some rights in later years but is now considered defacto closed. Sen. McGinn then asked if Colorado originally agreed to the Court Master. It was explained by Mr. Pope that the Court accepted the lawsuit filed by Kansas, then the US Supreme Court appointed the Special Master, so neither state got to make this choice.

Sen. Taddiken asked if the funding was an enhancement. It was confirmed by Mr. Pope that the money is an enhancement and comes from the General Fund in the Water Management Surfaces in the Department's budget. Sen. Taddiken asked about the status of the water level in Harlan county, Nebraska Reservoir. Mr. Pope stated that the 4-year drought has taken its toll in Harlan county. Without a wet winter to provide spring runoff, the reservoir will be in bad shape.

It was asked by Sen. Teichman if anything was being done east of the Garden City area to help the farmers. Mr. Pope stated that they are trying to help. The Arkansas River is one of the most highly developed river systems in the country. It has extremely heavy use, which goes all the way back to the 1870s. The river was fully developed by 1900. The Basin Management Program helps the people in the Dodge City to Great Bend areas to address their issues for the long-term.

Sen. McGinn thanked Mr. Pope and asked if there were any bills to be introduced. Sen. Taddiken asked the Committee to consider introducing a bill that would authorize the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to issue big game permits to the Commissioners. These permits could be transferred to a organizations that actively promote wildlife conservation. The Chair then asked for questions for Sen. Taddiken regarding this bill. Sen. Huelskamp asked if this was similar to what the Committee discussed in the past couple of years. It was confirmed by Sen. Taddiken that this is very similar. It was moved by Sen. Taddiken to introduce the bill introduction and seconded by Sen. Lee. There was no discussion and the introduction was approved by voice vote.

Seeing no other bill introductions, Chairperson McGinn adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m.