

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Faber at 3:30 P.M. on March 17, 2008, in Room 783 of the DSOB.

All members were present except:

Representative Doug Gatewood - excused
Representative Rocky Fund - excused
Representative Vaughn Flora - excused

Committee staff present:

Raney Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Hank Avila, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Gordon Self, Revisor of Statutes
Kristen Kellems, Revisor of Statutes
Florence Deeter, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Representative Lee Tafaelli, District #47
Steve Adams, Natural Resources Coordinator, Kansas Wildlife and Parks
Tracy Streeter, Director, Kansas Water Office

Others attending:

See attached list.

Hearing on HCR 5032 - Request memorializing Congress to amend the Flood Control Act of 1944 and public law 83.780

The Chairman opened the meeting and recognized the birthday of Representative Knox.

Representative Tafaelli, District #47, spoke to the committee in support of **HCR 5032**. He said the issue of support for enough water from various reservoirs to accommodate navigation on the Missouri River causes economic harm to all of Kansas (Attachment 1). Representative Tafaelli indicated that frequent releases by the Corps of Engineers has not produced a positive result in raising the water levels of the Missouri River; records reveal no more than one barge tug on the Missouri River at any time. He said navigation on the Missouri River is currently not a profitable business as it was in 1944, when Congress passed the Pick-Sloan Act to address water issues related to the Missouri River Basin. Representative Tafaelli recommended passage of **HCR 5032** to encourage the United States Congress to change the Corps of Engineers' current system and their authority in relation to federal reservoirs.

Steve Adams, Natural Resources Coordinator, Kansas Wildlife and Parks, spoke in support of **HCR 5032**. He said that increasing the water level of the Missouri River a few inches cannot be maintained over a long period of time (Attachment 2). Mr. Adams explained the impact on wildlife, reduction of access for recreational activities, and additional diminishing of fresh water supply are some problems associated with frequent releases of water from Kansas reservoirs, and the result is no substantial benefit to navigation on the Missouri River. He advocates favorable passage of this resolution to facilitate updating the contractual agreements with the Corps of Engineers.

Tracy Streeter, Director, Kansas Water Office (KWO), indicated the agency's support for **HCR 5032**. He said that the Corps of Engineers has the authority to release uncommitted storage of water to augment the flow of the Missouri River (Attachment 3). Mr. Streeter indicated a six-foot draw at each of the reservoirs evacuates over 212,000 acre feet of water storage, which impacts the supply and quality of water. He said the KWO is working with the Corps of Engineers to conduct a study of the Kansas River Basin for the purpose of evaluating the impact of water releases from federal reservoirs. Mr. Streeter commented that in 2002, the lake was drawn down to a level that, because of drought conditions, required eighteen months for recovery to acceptable levels for recreation.

The Chairman closed the hearing on **HCR 5032**.

The Chairman called for consideration of **SB 558 - Irrigation districts; conducting elections by mail**.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee at 3:30 P.M. on March 17, 2008, in Room 783 of the DSOB.

Staff Raney Gilliland briefed the committee on the language of the bill, stating that mail ballots would be sent to all persons entitled to vote; members of the irrigations districts would be responsible for tabulating and certifying results and reporting the results to the county election officer. He said the purpose of the resolution is to make participation in district elections more accessible to voters who are elderly and to others who do not reside within the boundaries of the district.

Representative Aurand moved to adopt the Secretary of State's proposed balloon, noting the replacement of the words, *absentee* with *advance*, and to recommend the bill favorable for passage as amended. Representative Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed as amended (Attachment 4) .

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2008, at 3:30 p.m.