

***Kansas Farm Bureau
Policy Statement***

**Senate Natural Resources Committee
SB 310; An act concerning water**

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Submitted by:

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Chairman Ostmeyer and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of Senate Bill 310 relating to Local Enhanced Management Areas. I am Kent Askren, Assistant Director of Natural Resources for the Kansas Farm Bureau.

As a grassroots farm organization, Kansas Farm Bureau understands and appreciates the wisdom in resolving local problems on a local basis. That is the genesis behind SB 310 and the LEMA concept.

Overdevelopment of the Ogallala aquifer is a serious dilemma for those whose lives are impacted by its decline. Many adjustments have or will need to be made to sustain communities and promote profitable operations in Western Kansas. A one size fits all solution is not the answer.

We strongly support water rights as individual real property rights but when the strict enforcement of those rights will not solve the problem and may cause severe economic hardship on everyone involved, other solutions need to be considered.

Intensive Groundwater Use Control Area (IGUCA) is a tool to deal with such situations but many have a fear that the resultant action is too heavy handed and a top down directive. LEMA provides an opportunity for locals to establish a plan to address issues such as overdevelopment in a proactive fashion without the fear of receiving a final decision far beyond the scope of their initial efforts.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony, I would be happy to answer questions at the appropriate time.

Kansas Farm Bureau represents grassroots agriculture. Established in 1919, this non-profit advocacy organization supports farm families who earn their living in a changing industry.