

October 10, 2022

Four County LEMA  
c/o Ronda Huton  
1320 Research Park Drive  
Manhattan, KS 66502

Subject: Submission of Testimony Pertaining to the Public Hearing for the Four County LEMA Plan

The Upper Smoky Hill Regional Advisory Committee represents all or portions of seven counties in west central Kansas. Our mission is to represent water users in the region and address a variety of water resource issues. The focus of our efforts is to conserve and sustain the life of the High Plains/ Ogallala Aquifer within our region. This aquifer provides the vast majority of our water supply and is the sole source of supply in most of the region.

The Upper Smoky Hill Regional Advisory Committee developed goals and specific actions to conserve and extend the life of our groundwater resources. One of our first actions under these goals was to support the implementation of the Wichita County Local Enhanced Management Area (LEMA), and support GMD No. 1 and KDA in the development of additional LEMA's within the region.

We believe that the GMD No. 1 Four County LEMA is compatible with all the requirements for implementation of a LEMA. The depletion of the High Plains/ Ogallala Aquifer within the region is a growing concern. The rate of withdrawal of groundwater within the area substantially exceeds the rate of recharge. This level of depletion poses a serious problem relating to a sufficient water supply within GMD No. 1.

It is certainly within the public interest to act and take measures that will mitigate the depletion of this vital water resource. Agriculture is one of the main economic drivers of the region. A substantial reduction in agricultural production will diminish the economy and adversely impact the communities that depend upon agriculture. Excessive depletion threatens the ability to supply feed and water for livestock production, which is

one of the largest value-added sectors of the local economy. In the extreme, communities and individual users may not have sufficient quantity and quality of water to meet domestic needs.

The geographic area encompassed by GMD No. 1 is suitable because the majority of the region has experienced substantial to extreme depletion. The entire district will benefit from the conservation that the GMD No. 1 Four County LEMA will likely achieve. This is a step in the right direction to achieving sustainability within the region.

Please accept this statement of support for approval of the GMD No. 1 Four County LEMA on behalf of the Upper Smoky Hill Regional Advisory Committee.

Respectfully,

Alicia Allen

Chair, Upper Smoky Hill Regional Advisory Committee