



**December 3, 2020**

**Re: Wichita County LEMA Second Public Hearing**

This written comment is from the Kansas Water Office regarding the Wichita County Local Enhanced Management Area (LEMA) Plan submitted to the Chief Engineer of the Division of Water Resources by the Western Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 1 (GMD No.1) on March 26, 2020.

The Kansas Water Authority (KWA) was created by the Kansas Legislature in 1981 to consult with and be advisory to the Governor, the Legislature, and the director of the Kansas Water Office. The Kansas Water Authority and Kansas Water Office have since conducted water planning activities for the State of Kansas more recently through development of the State Water Plan in 2009 as well the 50 Year Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas process (Vision) from 2013 through 2016, with input and direction received from local advisory committees and other stakeholders, groups and organizations. Currently, the Kansas Water Office is in the process of completing a 5-year update, incorporating the Vision into the updated State Water Plan. State water planning goals and objectives which would be supported by establishment of the Wichita County LEMA include the following:

2009 State Water Plan (KWA Approved Jan. 2009)

- *By 2010, reduce water level decline rates within the Ogallala aquifer and implement enhanced water management in targeted areas.*

A Long-Term Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas (KWA Approved Jan. 2015)

- *Guiding Principles: Locally driven solutions have the highest opportunity for long term success. Therefore, the intentional focus of the action items presented in the Vision are to provide the necessary tools and support to allow for greater flexibility and management of water resources at the local level.*
- *Water Conservation Strategy: Reduce barriers and increase development of locally driven conservation and management plans.*

Upper Smoky Hill Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Regional Goals/Action Plans (KWA Approved Oct. 2016)

- *Support GMD No. 1 in formulating another LEMA plan.*
- *Develop a water reduction plan and begin implementation by January 2016. Short term: Reduce the rate of depletion of the aquifer within five years to sustain the economy, but begin implementation of conservation immediately. Long term: By evaluating success every five years, determine if conservation measures are achieving a reduced rate of depletion. (Rationale: Within each five-year evaluation period, new technologies and crop varieties as well as additional sources of supply will be more and more available.)*

Therefore, the Kansas Water Office encourages the approval of the proposed Wichita County Local Enhanced Management Area (LEMA) plan, submitted on March 26, 2020, to the extent that it is consistent with the goals and objectives identified above. The Kansas Water Office supports the local efforts of the Western Kansas Groundwater Management District Number 1, and others, to conserve and extend the usable life of the Ogallala Aquifer within the boundaries of the Wichita County LEMA Management Plan proposal.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Acting Director