

June 24, 2023

06/26/2023

Water Transfer Hearing Panel
c/o Chief Engineer of Division of Water Resources
Kansas Department of Agriculture
1320 Research Park Drive
Manhattan, KS 66502

Water Resources
Received

KS Dept Of Agriculture

Water Transfer Hearing Panel Members:

My name is Leroy Wetzel. I live and farm just to the west of the Arkansas River and the R-9 Ranch in Edwards County Kansas. I have lived here all my life except for 5 years when I went to Kansas State University and received a Bachelors Degree in Mechanical Engineering during the early 1970's. Emphasis of my degree was on Fluid Dynamics. My wife Janet and I live in the same home that my grandfather built on land that was homesteaded in 1894. During the 1930's my dad and uncles built and sold irrigation pumps and installed irrigation wells not only on their own land but on the neighbors also.

During my many years on an irrigated farm I have watched the alluvial aquifer rise and fall many times. The Arkansas River is a big part of what kept our alluvium recharged over the years. Now the river is dry and only runs on a rare occasion following periods of heavy rainfall, so we see that the recharge from the river is greatly diminished.

Conservation efforts have helped to alleviate the over appropriation of water in my area. A few years ago I served on the Middle-Ark River Sub Basin committee where we developed voluntary and incentive based solutions to the declining water levels. These solutions undoubtedly helped slow the decline but periods of drought have taken a toll on the aquifer in our area.

I feel that the continuous withdrawal of 4,800 acre feet of water from the alluvial aquifer will hasten the decline to a point where many wells will have reduced production, even to a point where abandonment needs to be considered. I sincerely ask that you as members of the Panel look open minded at the evidence provided by Steve Larson and also by Keller-Bliesner.

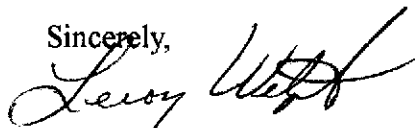
Once the ranch is converted from irrigation to municipal water supply it's difficult to make reductions in appropriation and I hope we don't have to go there. We need to get it right from the beginning. In looking at all the evidence I truly believe that 2600 acre feet of water transferred annually will be sustainable. The Transfer Act requires that the change of use will not impair existing water rites. Both Junior and Senior water right are included.

In closing I would like to offer my support for a transfer of a reasonable and sustainable quantity that meets the need of the cities without impairing local water rights. 2600 acre feet transferred from Edwards County combined with existing sources for municipal water supply will meet the cities needs and contribute to the sustainability of the alluvial aquifer.

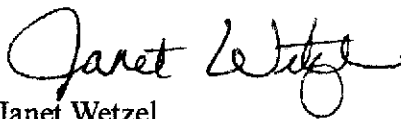
I am sure that you as members of the Hearing Panel will weigh all the evidence presented as yours is a monumental task: To get the first implementation of the Water Transfer Act right.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Leroy Wetzel



Janet Wetzel

Please note, the following are our current water rights: 8, 33, 34, 37, 1191, 1421, 2665, 5245, 14034, 14252, 15471, 16065, 17912, 18817, 20396, 23576, 25267, 28298, 31038, 32483, 33714, 35583, 35945, 36234 and 36235.