

Rep. Sloan Participates at Governor's Water Conference

Rep. Tom Sloan (R, Lawrence) participated in the Governor's Water Conference by emphasizing the need to address the long-term health of the state's drinking water supply lakes. "Water, more than energy or other considerations, will determine the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of Kansas," said Sloan. "Without adequate, safe, clean water there is no agriculture, domestic water supplies become prohibitively expensive if available, and people leave for more hospitable areas."

The Conference addressed the Ogallala Aquifer's health where 30 percent of the total available water has been depleted and a projected 70 percent will be depleted in the next 50 years without significant changes in our western Kansas water use. Also discussed was the health of the larger Corps of Engineers' created Reservoirs that have siltation and water quality issues. All or parts of many reservoirs were closed the past few years due to blue-green algae infestations (e.g, Marion, Perry) that pose serious health problems for humans and animals.

During a recent trip to Washington, D.C., Rep. Sloan met with members of the Corps of Engineers Headquarters staff about increasing partnership opportunities between the Corps and State. During the Water Conference, Rep. Sloan held discussions with the Tulsa Regional Corps leadership team and secured a commitment from both Headquarters, Tulsa, and Kansas City Corps staff to meet with the Governor and his water agency heads to explore how Corps and State financial and other resources can more effectively be deployed in the next ten years.

The State already has secured an agreement with the Corps to dredge John Redmond Reservoir to ensure that adequate water supplies and flood control capabilities continue for the Wolf Creek Nuclear Generating Station and the people living along the Neodesha River. "I believe that the development of a ten year coordinated plan between the Corps and Kansas will result in the more effective expenditure of limited funds and a better prioritization on what projects should be completed," Sloan said. "The Governor; Kansas Biological Survey; Kansas Geological Survey; Kansas Water Office; and the Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism collectively need to be engaged with the Corps leadership in developing such a plan."

Rep. Sloan is serving his 10th term in the Kansas House of Representatives. He is Chairman of the Vision 2020 Committee and a member of the Agriculture and Natural Resources and Transportation Committees. He also serves on the U.S. Department of Energy's Electricity Advisory Committee and the GridWise Architecture Council, Federal Communications Commission's Intergovernmental Affairs Committee, the National Conference of State Legislatures' Energy Supply Task Force, and Co-Chairs the Council of State Governments' Interstate Electric Transmission Line Siting Compact Task Force.

###