

**Wichita County Locally Enhanced Management Area (WC LEMA) Renewal Proposal  
Summary for Public Review**

**May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026 – Leoti Kansas**

**Western Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 1**

***Timeline Recap***

**October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025** – GMD1 Submitted the WC LEMA for renewal

**January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026** – Division of Water Resources held the LEMA Hearing in Leoti, KS

**March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026** – Order was received, DWR sent back the LEMA to the GMD1 with required changes in order to be approved by the chief engineer.

-Preliminary areas of concern; carryover, overlapping of the WCA and the LEMA, non-use allocations receiving a zero allocation for the renewal period as a way of cleaning up the data, open appeals process.

**March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026** – GMD1 Staff and Board Members met with Chief Engineer Earl Lewis, and staff to discuss referenced concerns from DWR.

**April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026** – GMD1 Staff and Board Members met with Chief Engineer, and staff to propose an alternative option possibly limiting carryover for use in years of extreme drought emergency.

**April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026** – GMD1 Staff and Board Members met with Chief Engineer, and staff to discuss a counter proposal from DWR. The following proposal reflects those discussions, and current revisions to the renewal LEMA.

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***Proposed Renewal: 2026–2035 (10-Year Period)***

**Key Changes in This Resubmitted Proposal**

- **10-year term (2026–2035)** instead of 5 years, with a required amendment opportunity before 2031. *Proposal from DWR*
- **Revised goal language** emphasizing water level stabilization is the goal of the LEMA, achieved in an economically viable manner according to local stakeholder input.
- **Carryover flexibility:** Up to 2 years of unused base allocation may be accrued and used **at any time** during the 10-year period.
- **No-use wells:** Originally it was proposed that in an effort to clean up the viable water use throughout the county, and DWR concerns of paper water allocations, non-use wells from 2021-2025 would receive a zero allocation for the renewal LEMA period but could appeal it at any time to receive their allocation. These wells will be given the same allocation regardless of non-use during the first LEMA period. *Proposal from DWR*

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- **Combined Well Units:** Can be filed and approved at any time during the 10-year period (*subject to GMD1 staff/Board review for consistency with conservation goals*). Once the Renewed LEMA is approved, CWU applications that have already been filed in 2026 can be processed.
- **Wichita County WCA:** Proposed removal from the LEMA to allow both programs to operate more effectively and for accounting reasons. Should an individual decide to leave the WCA they would be subject to the LEMA. *Proposal from DWR*
- **Appeals process:** Strict, ongoing appeals available throughout the period, at Board discretion, primarily for cases of extreme undue economic hardship as well as individual water level stabilization.
- **Sub-region focus and 2031 amendment:** GMD1 will work with KGS on enhanced water level monitoring and sub-region delineation and localized Q Stable analysis. If specific sub-areas are still declining, the 2031 amendment may apply an additional reduction of up to 10% per Board Discretion.