

12/19/2005 Moran Passes Legislation to Assist Irrigators in North Central Kansas

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today announced passage of legislation he introduced with Congressman Tom Osborne (R-NE) to assist farmers in four irrigation districts, two in Kansas and two in Nebraska, by extending payment schedules. The districts in Kansas include portions of Republic, Jewell, Rooks and Osborne Counties.

"Farmers in Kansas and Nebraska are struggling to survive the financial hardship that five years of drought has brought to the region," Moran said. "This legislation will ease the burden on irrigators in these water districts that have not been receiving adequate water."

Farmers in these irrigation districts have paid for water they have not received. Two of the districts have not received any water, and the other two have received only limited amounts. H.R. 4000 modifies payment contracts between the Bureau of Reclamation and the four irrigation districts - Kansas Bostwick Irrigation District No. 2, the Bostwick Irrigation District of Nebraska, the French-Cambridge Irrigation District and the Webster Irrigation District No. 4.

"This legislation will be extremely helpful to the irrigators," said Kenny Nelson, superintendent of the Kansas Bostwick Irrigation District. "Making full payments while not receiving water does not work. The bills coming from the Bureau of Reclamation shortly after the first of the year will now be manageable."

This legislation will ease the burden on producers by equalizing the payments over the length of the current contract. The modification yields the Bureau of Reclamation the same number of dollars for repayment, but because the payments are spread evenly over time, the annual payment amounts would be reduced.

Moran recently testified before the House Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power to explain the need for this legislation. Moran is a senior member of the House Agriculture Committee.

###