

Governor's Press Release:

LINCOLN, NE – Today, Governor Jim Pillen took another step in protecting and preserving Nebraska's vital water resources. Speaking to executive-level members, he kicked off the first meeting of the Water Quality and Quantity Task Force.

"We have tremendous opportunity through this group to initiate actions that will impact Nebraska for generations to come," said Gov. Pillen. "For years, water policy in this state has been largely reactive. Now, we have the knowledge and technology in place to be proactive in how we approach issues that impact our farmers, our industries and our communities."

These core members, appointed by the Governor, represent a cross-section of interests and industries:

Jesse Bradley, Interim Director, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Department of Environment and Energy (DEE)

Matt Manning, Engineer, Department of Natural Resources

Marty Stange, Environmental Supervisor, City of Hastings

Brandon Hunnicutt, Chairman, Nebraska Corn Board

Don Batie, Past-President of the Natural Resources Commission and farmer

Dean Settje, Founder & President, Settje Agri-Services

Scott Schaneman, General Manager of the North Platte Natural Resources District

Additional members will be added in the coming weeks, creating a team of about 20 – 25 people. In addition to water quality and quantity, an inter-related issue is education. Members of the group say they want to encourage increased adoption of technologies and solutions for handling water issues, especially in agriculture.

Over the next 12 to 15 months, the group will meet to identify short, mid, and long-term goals and accompanying action items to be pursued. To better focus on specific issues, members may break down into smaller subgroups.

"Our water is our holy grail because of the Ogallala Aquifer," noted Gov. Pillen. "We must be smart about how we use our water and keep it as clean and contaminate free as possible. Only then, will we be able to meet all necessary demands."

Gov. Pillen announced the creation of the Water Quality and Quantity Task Force when he testified on LB317. That bill, brought on his behalf by Senator Tom Brandt, calls for the merger of the Department of Environment and Energy (DEE) with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), in part, to bring more meaningful and streamlined oversight around water use.

North Platte NRD Addition:

If you have thoughts or concerns related to the quantity or quality of our groundwater, please reach out to Scott Schaneman at the North Platte NRD at 308-632-2749