

Testimony on SB285

Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

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Chair Kerschen and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment in support of SB287 related to the revisions of the Kansas Storage Tank Act (KSA 65-34,100 *et seq.*). The KDHE Bureau of Environmental Remediation is responsible for protecting human health and the environment from releases of hazardous substances, petroleum products and other pollutants. The bureau manages several remediation programs with the goal of cleaning up contamination to reduce or eliminate the risk to human health and the environment, as well as return impacted properties to productive use.

As proposed, SB285 amends the Kansas Storage Tank Act as necessary to extend the sunset date of the UST Redevelopment Fund and Compensation Advisory Board (KSA 65-34,134) from July 1, 2024 to July 1, 2032. KDHE can confidently predict a need to extend the program through at least 2032. The UST Redevelopment Fund provides reimbursement of preapproved costs to the property owner, up to \$25,000 per facility for the removal of abandoned underground storage tanks (USTs). A UST can be “abandoned” when there is no responsible tank owner and can be the result of foreclosure, dissolution of the business or bankruptcy. Eligibility requirements include no former association with the sale of petroleum at the facility.

Petroleum contamination is often identified during an assessment conducted at the time of a tank removal. KDHE anticipates more contamination will be discovered with the increase in abandoned tank removals because of the storage tank program objectives.

This amendment will have a positive impact by extending the availability of the funds to reimburse future abandoned UST removal activities and assess potential contamination sources. Removal of abandoned USTs at blighted properties will increase the community’s economic growth and bring jobs to the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the importance of this bill. I welcome any questions.