

TESTIMONY for House Bill No. 2575-Kansas Drycleaner Environmental Response Act
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Charles Brewer, President, GSI Engineering
March 16, 2020

Chairman Kerschen and Committee Members:

Good morning, my name is Charles Brewer. I am president and principle geologist of GSI Engineering, LLC. GSI Engineering is a Wichita based firm that specializes in geotechnical engineering, environmental consulting, and material testing in Kansas and surrounding states. We have provided our consulting services to private industry and governmental agencies since 1973. Over the years our professional geologists, engineers and environmental technicians have worked numerous environmental investigations and cleanups for many clients across the State of Kansas. Our clients range from single-site owners to large, international integrated companies. In addition, I actively participate as a member of the KDHE Bureau of Environmental Remediation's stakeholder group that evaluates existing programs and identifies issues such as those being discussed today.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony in support of the changes proposed in HB 2575.

GSI Engineering and I would like to give our full support to the modifications proposed in HB-2575. GSI Engineering has been involved with the assessment, cleanup and public water hookup associated with many of the dry cleaner Sites in the State. As many of you are aware, over the last five years in the Wichita area there has been a couple of very complex environmentally contaminated sites associated with former Dry Cleaning operations (Four Season's and Haysville). These two sites alone have negatively impacted a large number of households by contaminating private drinking water wells and property values. In the State of Kansas, there are still many households using water wells for their drinking water supply (even in a highly developed City like Wichita). Just one of these large sites can and has depleted the dry cleaning funds available to protect the health and safety of the residences of the State.

Identifying and investigating dry cleaner sites before they become a problem is a positive step that could reduce the overall risk to public health and save money down the road. Providing adequate funding and authority to allow KDHE the ability to conduct an immediate assessment on potentially contaminated dry cleaner sites could help prevent another Haysville from happening. Funding is also needed to make sure cleanup efforts can be fully implemented and safeguards to the public are executed. A contamination plume from a dry cleaning facility is much different than one coming from an old gas station, these plumes contain chlorinated organics that can travel many miles and impact a greater number of people. Some of these contaminants are considered carcinogens to humans. Cleanup of these plumes can be very costly.

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Over the last few years I have attended many of the public meetings held by KDHE regarding the cleanup of dry cleaner sites in the Wichita area. There is a common theme from the public at those meetings:

- Why doesn't KDHE assess all the old dry cleaners' sites if they pose such a big health problem.
- Why isn't there more funding for this program.
- The public and local politic figures want to blame the State and KDHE for this contamination, but they don't realize it was commonly the local dry cleaning operation that caused the problem, and that KDHE is only trying to help them.

I want to close my testimony by stating that you have a great group of people over at KDHE and I believe they work hard to address these sites in a thorough and professional manner given their current funding limitations. GSI Engineering provides environmental services in many states and in my opinion, there is no other State Environmental Department as responsive as KDHE.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you and I would gladly answer any questions you, or committee members might have.

Charles A. Brewer P.G.