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Date: February 5, 2020
To: Senator Dan Kerschen, Chairman, Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee
From: Shahira Stafford, Kansas Cooperative Council
RE: Senate Bill 285, sunset extension of the redevelopment fund for removing abandoned underground storage tanks

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 285. My name is Shahira Stafford, and I represent the Kansas Cooperative Council (KCC). The KCC represents all types of cooperatively-structured businesses including agriculture, utility, financial, and consumer coops. Simply, cooperatives differ from other businesses because they are member-owned, member-controlled, democratically-governed, and profits are returned to our patrons.

Agricultural cooperatives often have grain, agronomy, precision ag, seed, feed, and fuel operations. Some of our members have had underground petroleum tanks on their sites that were no longer in use. The redevelopment fund addressed in SB 285 has successfully helped over 95 facilities in the removal of 293 abandoned underground storage tanks (USTs) since the program's inception in 2012.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment estimates that there are still at least 270 abandoned USTs that remain in the ground. SB 285 would extend the sunset of this redevelopment fund program through 2032, encouraging more UST removal. Removal of abandoned tanks leads to quicker identification of potential contamination and decreases blighted facilities across the state.

For these reasons, the KCC stands in support of SB 285 and hopes the committee will pass the bill favorably. Thank you for the opportunity to comment today, and I'd be happy to answer questions at the appropriate time.

Shahira Stafford
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