



**House Committee on Agriculture  
Hearing on House Bill 2575  
February 17, 2020**

**Written Testimony in support to HB 2575 on behalf of the City of Manhattan  
By Randy D. DeWitt, P.E., Assistant Director of Public Works**

Good afternoon Chair Highland, Vice Chair Smith and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Agriculture.

**The City of Manhattan supports HB 2575**, amending the Kansas drycleaner environmental response act to change the required deductible rate and penalty fine amount.

The City of Manhattan provides water service for a population of nearly 60,000 people, including Kansas State University and the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility. Additionally, wholesale water service is provided to two (2) rural water districts in both Riley and Pottawatomie Counties and multiple smaller local water system outside of the City. But we are not unique in the fact that it does not matter who the customer is or how many there are, we share the common task of all public water supply systems to provide sufficient quantities of safe, clean domestic water, that meets and exceeds all state and federal drinking water standards, and contributes to the health and welfare of the communities that we serve.

Manhattan is very blessed to have a reliable and plentiful water source, utilizing a network of 20 vertical wells that draw groundwater from the alluvial aquifer that lies within close proximity to the Big Blue and Kansas Rivers. On average, we draw approximately 2.5 billion gallons of raw water from this source each year.

In 2002, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) finalized the Environmental Site Assessment that determined that chlorinated solvent chemical spills, originating from two (2) drycleaning businesses, had contaminated the groundwater and posed a significant potential threat to a portion of Manhattan's public water supply. Subsequent bioremediation efforts occurred from 2005 and 2015. These efforts, funded through the Kansas Drycleaner Environmental Response Trust Fund were critically important to ensuring that the much of the contamination was contained within the proximity of the source.

In 2016, unfortunately it became apparent that a plume of vinyl chloride, which is a degradant of the parent contaminants, had migrated past the bioremediation site, with the leading edge of the plume being detected in monitoring wells that are a mere 500 linear feet upgradient from one of Manhattan's public water supply wells, Well No. 13. Again, KDHE responded quickly by studying the extents and severity of the plume, and commencing the design of biosparging remediation project intended to eliminate the vinyl chloride plume and protect the City's water supply.

In 2017, while the biosparging system was still under design, groundwater samples taken from Well No. 13 showed that vinyl chloride was present in the groundwater directly at the well. The concentration level of the vinyl chloride was 15 parts per billion (ppb). The maximum contaminant level for vinyl chloride in drinking water is 2 ppb. In order to prevent further migration of the plume, the use of Well No. 13 was temporarily suspended, as was the use of Well No. 12, which is immediately downgradient. On the positive side, upon the installation of KDHE's biosparging system, the downgradient vinyl chloride levels were quickly reduced to zero. This allowed for the continued use of Well Nos. 12 and 13. It also indicated that the biosparging system would be effective in substantially reducing the contamination threat, so long as the system remained in operation.

With the critical funding and support provided by the Dry Cleaner Program, through studies and ongoing remediation efforts, the story of Manhattan's public water supply remains a quiet and successful one, despite the adversity of dealing with a serious threat to the health and welfare of our community. Without sustainable funding and support for this program, the story has the potential to be a much less favorable one.

The City of Manhattan is very fortunate to be a beneficiary of the Dry Cleaner Program and has great interests in the long-term financial sustainability of the Kansas Drycleaner Environmental Response Trust Fund. We understand that we are only one of many communities that rely on this support. We also understand that the need for the support is only growing throughout the State of Kansas, while the monetary resources are not.

For all the reasons stated above, the City of Manhattan supports HB 2575, amending the Kansas drycleaner environmental response act to change the required deductible rate and penalty fine amount. Thank you for your time and consideration.