

**Testimony in Support of HB 2477
to the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
by Kelsey Olson, Deputy Secretary
Kansas Department of Agriculture
January 30, 2024**

Good afternoon, Chairman Rahjes and members of the committee. My name is Kelsey Olson and I serve as the Deputy Secretary for the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2477. The Remediation Reimbursement Program and the Kansas Agricultural Remediation Fund were established in 2001 with the support of the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA). This remediation program provides a funding mechanism to reimburse eligible persons for costs associated with the cleanup of agricultural sites in need of corrective action. This fund is supported by the annual environmental fees assessed on commercial grain warehouses, agricultural chemical product registrations, fertilizer product registrations, custom fertilizer blenders, and pesticide dealers. The fund and reimbursement requests are overseen by the Kansas Agricultural Remediation Board (KARB) and KDA holds an ex officio position on the Board.

This bill increases the maximum reimbursement allowance from \$200,000 to \$300,000 for an eligible individual, and from \$400,000 to \$600,000 when both a buyer and seller or lessee and lessor are responsible for remediation expenses. This bill also provides an increase in the statutory limit on KARB's administrative fees to \$175,000. There have been no increases in these set allowances since the program's creation in 2001. Inflation and the increase in the cost of goods since 2001 has diluted the value of the dollar over time. The amendments in this bill would provide additional financial support which would assist in alleviating those increased costs, ensuring that the Remediation Reimbursement Program is equipped to effectively partner with interested parties. As a Board member, the agency recognizes the importance of funding, and we are pleased to see how beneficial the funding is to individuals and entities that take on the challenge of remediating a site. I am pleased to offer KDA's support in increasing the authorized amount of funding for remediation efforts.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2477. I'm happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.