

**House Committee on Water
Proponent Verbal Testimony on HB 2424
William Carr, Director of the Bureau of Water
Kansas Department of Health and Environment
January 22, 2026**

Chair Minnix and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) stands in support of HB 2424. This bill would amend the Kansas Groundwater Exploration and Protection Act (K.S.A. 82a-1201, et seq.) and establish licensure of pump installation contractors through application and passing an exam and establishes requirements for reporting certain pump aspects on a form provided by the Secretary of KDHE within 30 days of pump installation. This legislation will not increase expenditures by KDHE, as it can be handled by existing staff resources and reporting infrastructure as a part of its water well contractor licensing program. There is some confusion with the bill language on how the license fees would be on a biennial basis, but renewal fees would be paid based on an annual fee basis. KDHE asks for clarification as to whether the intent of the bill was to keep the fees based on an annual fee for water well contractors and pump installation contractors.

Since 1974, KDHE has licensed water well contractors which requires passing an exam, then applying to KDHE, paying the application and rig fees, and providing references as to experience. Once licensed, a water well contractor renews their license annually. Continuing education requirements are part of the renewal process. As of 2025, there are 257 water well contractors with active licenses. KDHE reviews and accepts approximately 5,000 water well records annually for wells constructed, reconstructed and plugged in Kansas by those water well contractors, as well as landowners.

Support from licensed water well contractors for revising Article 12, specifically licensing pump installation contractors, reflects the following:

- The Kansas Ground Water Association (KGWA – formerly known as the Kansas Water Well Association (KWWA)), and Kansas licensed water well contractors have long requested that KDHE license pump installation contractors.
- Attempts in the late 1980s by the agency were unsuccessful and reflected an opinion from the Kansas Attorney General in 1989 (*AG Opinion 89-84*) that KDHE could not license pump installation contractors due to the wording of state law.
- All of Kansas' surrounding states require pump installation contractors to be licensed.
- Several Kansas counties require licensing of pump installation contractors in their county sanitary/environmental code.
- Plumbing codes and plumbing contractor licenses do not include information regarding KDHE water well regulations covering water well pumps, installation, associated equipment, or disinfection.
- Numerous examples of activities by non-licensed installers have been reported that allegedly violate KDHE water well regulations, jeopardizing the integrity of the water well and groundwater quality.
- By licensing pump installation contractors, KDHE will establish minimum standards to ensure consistency within the industry while protecting the safety of Kansas citizens and the quality of the groundwater resources of Kansas. These pump installation standards supplement the existing standards of water well contractors, leading to KDHE identifying best practices for performance of work.

- Should a pump installer not adhere to these minimum standards, KDHE will have legal recourse to address and correct the resulting problem.

HB 2424 also revises Article 12 by:

- Expanding the definition of license revocation to allow a contractor who wishes to no longer hold a license to voluntarily relinquish their license.
- Expanding definition of licensed water well contractor to include the term “plug,” which will better ensure proper plugging of abandoned water wells in Kansas.

KDHE would suggest an amendment to HB 2424 to remove the added language in K.S.A. 82a-1205 that indicates that rules and regulations regarding water well contractors and pump installation contractors should be adopted on a biennial basis and use the existing language indicating rules and regulations are annually based. This would align with the annual fee requirements in K.S.A. 82a-1209.

In summary, KDHE supports HB 2424 as further protection of the integrity of the state’s groundwater resources, consistent with provisions in surrounding states and as advocated by the state’s water well contractors.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I am happy to answer any questions.