



Written Testimony Provided to the

Senate Utilities Committee

February 20, 2019

Brad Mears, Assistant Executive Director

Testimony in Support of S.B. 169

Kansas Municipal Utilities (KMU) is the statewide association of community owned and operated electric, natural gas, water, wastewater, stormwater and telecommunications utilities across Kansas. As a non-profit association established by its member utilities in 1928, KMU is dedicated to serving the training needs and legislative & regulatory interests of our 184 consumer-owned utilities and the citizens, businesses and industries that they serve. Our membership ranges in size from some of the largest utilities in the state such as those operated by Kansas City Board of Public Utilities and the City of Wichita, down to some of the smallest utility systems in the state, some serving fewer than 100 customers.

As background, KMU was one of several stakeholders that worked with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment as a part of a Public Water Supply Legislative Working Group to review possible legislative changes impacting the Public Water Supply Program. Two of the areas reviewed involved operator certification fees and where the remittance of those fees were deposited. The consensus of the working group was to recommend and support the increased fees for operator certification (which have not been adjusted since 1975) provided that the revenues from any increase were to be used for the operator certification program and not deposited to the State General Fund.

KMU recognizes the importance of the Public Water Supply Supervision Program within the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the need for improved services to support public water suppliers across the state. With an unsustainable funding structure for the program and limitations from decreased staff, KMU and its' water utility members are willing to support an increase in fees for the program provided that public water suppliers see increased services and benefits and that all fees stay within the program area for which the fees are levied. In fact, KMU's Board of Directors recognized the importance of this issue and included it as a part of KMU's legislative priorities for this legislative session.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these written comments in support of Senate Bill 169.