

DATE: May 11, 2016

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ADEQ Launches New Program to Remove Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) Free of Charge

ADEQ program reduces potential negative public health impacts while promoting environmentally responsible economic growth by facilitating land reuse and removing barriers to redevelopment.

PHOENIX (May 11, 2016) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) officials announced today the launch of a new program designed to remove, free of charge, old and potentially leaking underground storage tanks (USTs). Most gas stations throughout the state store gasoline or diesel fuel in large USTs. Leaks of gasoline or diesel from USTs into surrounding soil or groundwater can result in a public health hazard and often hinder the sale and redevelopment of properties where these tanks are present.

“This new program will allow ADEQ to mitigate potential future public health impacts from gas and diesel contamination,” ADEQ Waste Programs Division Director Laura Malone said. “In addition, these tank removals have a great potential to increase the market value of the properties from which the tanks are being removed.”

Based on new authority created by the legislature last year, the new program enables ADEQ to remove old or unused tanks, conduct soil sampling near the removed tanks to determine if a leak has occurred and develop a baseline assessment of the property. Based on a recent ADEQ evaluation, the majority of reported releases are associated with USTs installed more than 20 years ago. Therefore, timely removal of old or unused tanks is critical. In Arizona, the average age of USTs throughout the state is 22 years, and more than 1,000 tanks are 30 years old or more.

Removing old tanks before they leak and finding tanks that have leaked as early as possible is critically important to reduce the likelihood of gasoline or diesel contaminating Arizona’s scarce surface and groundwater resources and lowers cleanup costs. Both potential public health impacts and cleanup costs increase significantly when a leak spreads to groundwater.

ADEQ completed the first tank removal under the new program at a property owned by C.T. Price Contracting, Inc. Company President, Clark Price, said, “The UST removal was so appreciated and does really make a difference for a small business owner.”

To participate in this program, a person either must own the property on which the UST is located or owned or operated the UST at some point in the past. ADEQ prioritizes applications based on risk to the environment and financial resources available to the applicant. For more information about this program, please visit:

<http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/waste/ust/statelead.html>

ADEQ

Established by the Arizona Legislature under the Environmental Quality Act of 1986, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is the state agency for protecting and enhancing public health and the environment of Arizona.

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