



Spurred by the environmental disaster at the AltEn ethanol plant near Mead, Sen. Bruce Bostelman has introduced a bill that would give the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy more authority to stop “bad actors” from polluting.

LB1102 would also require the person or company responsible for releasing the pollutant to clean it up or pay for cleanup costs if the state responds to a pollutant release and takes action to clean it up.

That provision would hold Nebraska taxpayers harmless in the event of pollutant releases like those that occurred when AltEn sold pesticide-polluted wetcake from the ethanol creation process to area farmers to spread on their fields and when wastewater from the plant escaped into nearby waterways.

While the AltEn cleanup is just beginning, and is being paid for by six seed industry giants whose pesticide-coated seed corn was processed into alcohol at the plant, its cost is certain to run into hundreds of thousands of dollars if not seven figures. Nebraska taxpayers shouldn't have to foot the bill for the AltEn cleanup or that of any future pollutant release.