

To: Kansas House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee

Re: Testimony of Debra Teufel, Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce in Opposition to House Bill 2273

Date: February 18, 2019

Mr. Chairman and committee members,

My name is Debra Teufel, and I am the President and CEO of the Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce. Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today on behalf of the Chamber, as well as our Greater Hutch Economic Development Partnership in opposition to House Bill No. 2273.

Our Hutch Chamber represents over 750 business members across Reno County. Our Chamber has adopted a Public Policy Agenda that specifically supports wind energy as a key component of our economic development strategy. Our policy encourages you to support programs which encourage the development of wind energy resources in Kansas. We believe that the extreme setbacks proposed by this bill will be detrimental to the future of wind energy in Kansas, and therefore detrimental to jobs and opportunities for employment in our community.

Reno County has worked diligently on behalf of wind energy over the last decade and the jobs created at Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy since 2010 have proven vital to growing our local economy. Today Siemens Gamesa's nacelle assembly facility employs nearly 300 high paying jobs at their facility in Hutchinson. In response to everchanging market conditions and customer requirements, Siemens recently invested millions of dollars to retool this facility for production of the newest SG-132 turbine platform. This was a significant investment in this facility in order to keep it viable for the future.

This bill, in an attempt to implement onerous wind farm setbacks, could have very serious implications for these primary manufacturing jobs in Reno County. Our community cannot afford to lose more manufacturing jobs. Onerous setback laws in other states have effectively eliminated all new wind farm development in those locations and we cannot afford for that to happen in Kansas. It is hard enough to compete for new industry investment and economic development projects. This would have serious implications. For example, a setback law in Ohio in 2014 required a distance of 1,125 feet from the nearest adjacent non-participating property line for all new wind farm development, and since then not a single new wind farm approval has been issued in that state. A setback of the magnitude proposed in this bill would likely bring all new wind farm development in Kansas to a halt and pose an existential threat to an industry that has brought nearly \$10 billion of investment to our state.

Furthermore, adequate energy resources are essential for economic development and we believe that decision related to the development of new production facilities should take into consideration the ability for local governments to exercise local decisions.

In the memo drafted by Reno County Administrator, Gary Meagher, dated Friday, February 15, he also opposes the bill. As Mr. Meagher stated, K.S.A. 12-741 is a comprehensive legislative enactment granting broad authority to cities and counties to regulate land uses within their respective jurisdiction. The Act provides for the creation of a Planning Commission and authorizes the Planning Commission to make a Comprehensive Plan for the development of the unincorporated area of the county. The Act prescribes the legal requirements by which a county may establish any zone or district or regulates or restricts the use of buildings or land therein. As stated by Mr. Meagher, a majority of Reno County Commissioners believe that land use regulation is best accomplished by local governmental entities. HB2273 is an unnecessary and unwise intrusion upon that authority already conveyed upon local government.

We concur with Mr. Meagher's statement. Any attempt to pass this bill is a gross overreach to take away the local controls that already exist. The Hutchinson Chamber believes that government works best when it is closest to those it serves, and we support the preservation of local control. We discourage you from enacting laws that supersede the wishes of local units of government in counties across Kansas. We ask you today to please allow local governing bodies to enact our own reasonable setback policies rather than trying to enact a one size fits all policy across Kansas.

I have visited personally with leaders of both Siemens Gamesa as well as NextEra Energy Resources who both are members of our Chamber and both have a stake in the future of wind energy development in Reno County. They are both involved corporate citizens who have worked hard to maintain a spirit of cooperation with local government as well as surrounding landowners. They are working hard to design a wind farm in Reno County that will inject new investment into our communities, will create direct jobs for the production, installation as well as long term maintenance, and create an additional revenue stream for participating landowners. NextEra has proposed a design that respects setbacks already in excess of the current Reno County standards in an effort to be respectful of the surrounding area.

I encourage you to allow the local planning process to prevail and request that you respectfully allow local control of the planning process to remain the norm in Kansas.

Thank you for listening to our concerns as this bill could have serious and dire economic development consequences if adopted in Kansas. We urge your disapproval of House Bill 2273. Thank you for your time and your consideration of the economic future of the wind industry for our State, region and local community.

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