



To: House Financial Institutions and Rural Development  
From: Alice Prester, Executive Director · Rice County Council on Aging  
Date: March 3, 2021  
RE: Testimony in Support of City Utility Low-Interest Program

To whom it may concern:

My name is Alice Prester and I am the Executive Director of the Rice County Council on Aging in Rice County, Kansas. Our non-profit organization offers many services to the residents of Rice County including, but not limited to:

- General Public Transportation
- Information and Assistance
- Part D Open Enrollment Assistance
- Housekeeping and Attendant Care
- Medicare and Medicaid Assistance
- Durable medical equipment loans

Another important piece of our assistance puzzle is our *Utility Assistance Program*. This program is available to all residents of Rice County, without age concerns. Every year there is a growing need for assistance with utilities, whether it is a gas bill or an electric bill. We assist residents with up to \$200 of assistance once per 12 months.

This need has only grown since the pandemic has taken its hold on Kansas. Many people were quarantined and unable to work or have lost their jobs and cannot keep up on their utilities. The assistance we provide comes from donations from the residents of Rice County. We do not get any other financial assistance for this program.

We are concerned with the need that will arise due to the upcoming gas bill that the City of Lyons has received that we will get an overwhelming number of residents needing assistance. Our guidelines only allow for assistance of \$200, if funds are available, and only if the assistance will ensure that the bill will be current with our assistance.

We are asking that you allow the City of Lyons to borrow from the State of Kansas, to cover the extraordinary natural gas costs incurred during the extreme weather crisis event of February 2021 from the State Ideal Funds. This would allow the City to spread the costs out over a longer time frame. Which could then be passed down to the residents of Lyons.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alice Mae Prester".

Alice Prester  
Director