

March 18, 2021

To whom it may concern:

This is my statement opposing Kansas Senate Bill 279, which will cripple the expanding Wind Energy Industry in Kansas. I urge a NO vote!

I oppose Kansas Senate Bill 279 for environmental, economic, and theological reasons.

This bill disincentives the expansion of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and conservation. Instead, it seeks to perpetuate dependence on dirty coal with harmful emissions that contribute to health problems and climate change, while consuming increasingly scarce surface and ground water. Emissions include carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides, methyl mercury, particulate matter, fly ash, and radioactive trace elements.

This bill essentially ignores the fact that Kansas is third in the nation in wind potential—clean, renewable, inexhaustible energy!

I am concerned about the environment and the health of our citizens. But I also care about the economic viability of our rural communities. During the last decade, wind energy has revitalized central and western Kansas and promoted sustainable economic development.

Kansas has no coal. What Kansas does have is potential for wind and solar energy. The wind industry (offering large and community wind farms; manufacturing of turbine components; and training for installers, operators, and maintenance professionals) could create thousands of new well-paying jobs across rural Kansas and add hundreds of millions of dollars to the local economy over the next 25 years. The small footprint of wind towers can allow farming and ranching to continue on the same land, with farmers receiving a significant steady income for the use of a small portion of their land.

I support the advancement of clean renewable energy, energy efficiency, and conservation. At this critical time for our planet, with climate change looming, we need more energy options, not less. We must encourage development of alternative energy sources and make our energy grid more up-to-date and resilient.

This bill fails to acknowledge that global climate change has become an existential crisis that must be addressed here and now. People of faith increasingly regard global climate change as the overarching moral, social, economic, environmental, national security, and theological issue of our age. Because it is happening more rapidly than projected even a few ago, some have suggested that this accelerating scenario goes beyond "our age," that it is biblical in its scope, magnitude, and consequences—affecting the entire arc of human history.

Humans have a responsibility to tend the Garden. We did not create the web of life; we are only a strand within it. What we do to the web we do to each other—and to ourselves. When we think of loving our neighbors as we have been taught, let us act realizing that we all live upwind and upstream from someone else—both in time and place.

We must work for a balanced energy policy that looks to the future, instead of repeating the past. Kansas can do better. Kansas deserves better. By progressing beyond mid 20th-century technology, by embracing 21st-century technology, Kansas can be a leader instead of a laggard!

Respectfully submitted,

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