

County Commissioner Terry Weidert  
Senate Utilities Committee  
Proponent Testimony for SB353

Chairman Thompson and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB353. I have lived in Labette County all my life, with the exception of two years when I graduated from Kansas State University with a degree in agronomy. Currently, I serve as the County Commissioner from the 2nd District of Labette County.

I spent 35 years in upper level management positions with a major road and bridge company. As the Director of Manufacturing I was responsible for the production process of nine plants in seven states. Conflicts and challenges are not new to me. In manufacturing we always had problems with materials, quality, employees, and delivery schedules. To handle these issues we utilized manuals, processes, gantt charts, many conference calls, and commitment charts with dates and details. If we ever needed additional resources, outside consultants were available. I was adequately equipped to handle any obstacle.

When it comes to working with the wind industry, I feel very inadequately equipped. I have looked at other counties, including Neosho and Allen, and tried to decipher what worked and what didn't. Labette County already has over 20,000 acres leased.

How do I handle the wind generation facility that snuck into Labette County without notice? Because of the problems I witnessed in neighboring counties, I wanted to know everything I could about the impact wind production would have on our residents and their children. I did more research. One problem that kept showing up was the lack of a plan to protect the people from the possible negative health effects of wind turbines in populated areas. This subject alone has divided our county in the worst possible way. It seemed like we could not come up with a solution that would satisfy both sides. The answer is setbacks. An adequate setback is critical. It is the one way to bring compromise and healing.

Finally I had identified the problem, but I had little authority to implement the solution. I am here today asking for your help. A few simple laws set in place by the State of Kansas, balancing the interests of both pro-wind and anti-wind, is not only a do-able task, but one that is desperately needed. That's why I was so glad to learn about SB 353.

I am NOT against wind energy. I AM against a large corporation taking advantage of an inadequately equipped county. The recommended standard setback from residences and schools by wind generation facilities is grossly inadequate. Their record of financial responsibility

verges on corruption. Their standard operating procedure of leasing ground without recording the leases in a timely manner is unethical and deceptive. There is more than enough evidence to suspect that wind generation facilities cannot be trusted.

I want you to know how important and beneficial passing SB353 would be for county officials. It provides the needed authority to pre approve the intended development by a wind generation facility in their county. It authorizes commissioners to control the minimum safe space for their schools, residential housing, and non-leased property. It empowers residents to have control over possible negative health effects from wind turbines. It helps protect the county from possible negative financial exposure, such as the expense of decommissioning wind turbines and attachments.

Let me close with one final thought. As it stands right now there are few, if any, regulations establishing setbacks in regard to wind generation facilities. Sometimes setbacks are not even negotiated. If setbacks are negotiated, it is usually 3 commissioners against a financially strong corporation that has already leased thousands of acres of land before the negotiations even begin. Commissioners need help protecting the unprotected citizens of the health risks from being too close to wind turbines. SB353 empowers the county commissioners with authority to establish safe setbacks.

The State of Kansas has an opportunity to assist my county, and every other county, with setbacks when dealing with wind generation facilities. SB353 equips the county commissioners with a tool providing for the safe, transparent and responsible development of a wind generation facility if one should be allowed to enter their county. This is why I support SB 353.

Thank you. Please let me know if you have any questions.