

Good morning and thank you for this opportunity. I am humbled to be here. My name is Kristy Horsch. My husband and I are raising 4 little girls on about 22 acres in the southeast portion of Reno county. We are blessed with a healthy and growing community and school that offer our children the opportunity to grow in a vibrant rural area. Our community is growing and alive with young families excited to raise their children under the wide open skies of Kansas.

Today, I stand before you because my community and my family are unprotected. As someone who is faced with the looming reality of living in the shadow flicker of the turbines, I am here in support of House Bill 2273. Make no mistake, I live in rural Kansas for a reason - I love the land, and I am committed to being a good steward of that land just as my neighbors are. As such, I support responsible renewable energy. This means I support developing wind projects that take into account the real effects of an industrial wind facility on rural residents and their community. Responsible development offers protections that are aligned with those called for in independent third party research. Bill 2273 does just that. It encourages the continuation of renewable energy sources in the state, but it requires responsible siting of turbines in a manner that aligns with current research and protects all rural citizens of our state.

My county, similarly to many rural counties, has large areas of unzoned land. This has been done by design and is typically something that eases the burden on both the county and the rural citizens. However, as industrial wind developers move into more populated areas, citizens living in and around the unzoned areas have no guarantee of any protections. As it stands, a developer can begin construction in an unzoned area with no protections for nonparticipating landowners. Most counties are unprepared for this outcome. While renewable energy may have been a dot on their horizon, the magnitude of these decisions and the protections required are typically not considered until a developer is already present and persistently pursuing their project. Many counties are then forced to play catch up and work from a place of fear. We cannot make good decisions when we are rushed and uninformed. We need to make decisions from a place of well rounded, exhaustive knowledge and preparation.

House Bill 2273 will offer a template for all counties. A jumping off point for the development of tailor made protections that their counties require. Final decisions are best left to the local government, but having thorough and objective protections as stated in this bill would allow our communities to flourish with renewable energy rather than crumble under the strain of irresponsible siting.

A Conditional Use Permit for an industrial wind facility was submitted in my county last week. According to the map accompanying this permit, there are families in my community that will have 10 turbines within a mile radius of their homes. The closest turbines being 2000 feet away from the homes of nonparticipating landowners and 1400 feet from participating landowners. With a 551 foot set back from property lines, portions of their property will be rendered useless as they are within the manufacturer's specified unsafe zone. Furthermore, turbines are being sited within half of a mile of private local airstrips despite the dangers a 500 foot turbine presents to small air craft. While only 2 miles from Cheney State Park, 20 turbines have been sited despite the State Wildlife and Park's request for a 3 mile buffer to protect the reservoir that provides drinking water to Wichita and the active wildlife population including. Bald Eagles and Whopping Crane that nests and lives there.

During the last year of attempting to protect my family and my community, I have learned too much. I have listened to experts from both sides. I have spent countless hours on research. Over and over again, these long term studies as well as independent third party, peer reviewed research point to the same things that the experts who are to follow me today will indicate - concerning health cases, property value loss, safety concerns, environmental burdens, and a vast array of other issues.

Some will disagree with the data. Some will say that despite the data, these protections are too restrictive. I can say that my children will not be guinea pigs in this experiment. My husband and I are entrusted with their health and safety, and we cannot stay in an area that has the potential for causing harm under this guise. I am not the only one in my community of this opinion as I am here today with other mothers who also are in the same position. It will be difficult for us to leave. We, like many others, have most of our material worth tied to our home. If our property values drop or if we cannot sell due to the wind facility being irresponsibly close to our home and school, it will be financially difficult and emotionally devastating for our family and our community. Without proper protections, we will be forced from our homes.

House bill 2273 is a glimmer of hope. This bill encourages the wind industry to continue, but guarantees protection for Kansas' most valuable assets- our land and our people. I encourage you to put yourself in our position - nothing to gain, so very much to lose. Please do not allow irresponsible turbine siting to take my family's home. Please do not allow a billion dollar industry to dictate protections that will lead to the destruction of our rural community and the lifestyle our children thrive in. Please support the protections the rural citizens of Kansas desperately need and approve House Bill 2273.

Thank you so much for your careful consideration. We pray God grants you wisdom in this decision, and we appreciate your efforts to protect us more than you know.

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