

February 17, 2019

RE: HB2273

Dear Mr. Chairman,

The Kansas Soaring Association was established in 1961 to promote the sport of Soaring in Kansas. We are a chapter of the 10,000 member Soaring Society of America. Our members across the state fly sailplanes for recreation and competition. Our main base of operations is the Sunflower Gliderport south of Hutchinson. At Sunflower we have hosted many regional and national championships. We will be hosting the US Nationals there in June 2019. There are other established soaring operations at the airport in Gardner, KS and at McMaster Field, near Wichita. Additionally there has been occasional gliding activity at many airports in Kansas, including Strother Field (Winfield), Wellington, Kingman, Newton, Ulysses, Hutchinson, Atwood, Colby, McPherson, and Jabara. Additionally, many of the airports in Kansas have at one time or another provided a safe landing site for a sailplane.

We write you today to support the concept of airport setbacks proposed in House Bill 2273. A study at the University of Kansas, Report no. K-TRAN: KU-13-6, released in January 2014, identified that the turbulence caused by wind turbines can present a high hazard to aircraft controllability. As can be seen in Figure E.1 of the report, the hazard can remain high at a distance exceeding 25,000 feet during high wind conditions. While we are fully supportive of the proposed 15,480 ft. setback, we would encourage the committee to consider extending the airport setback to 26,400 ft.

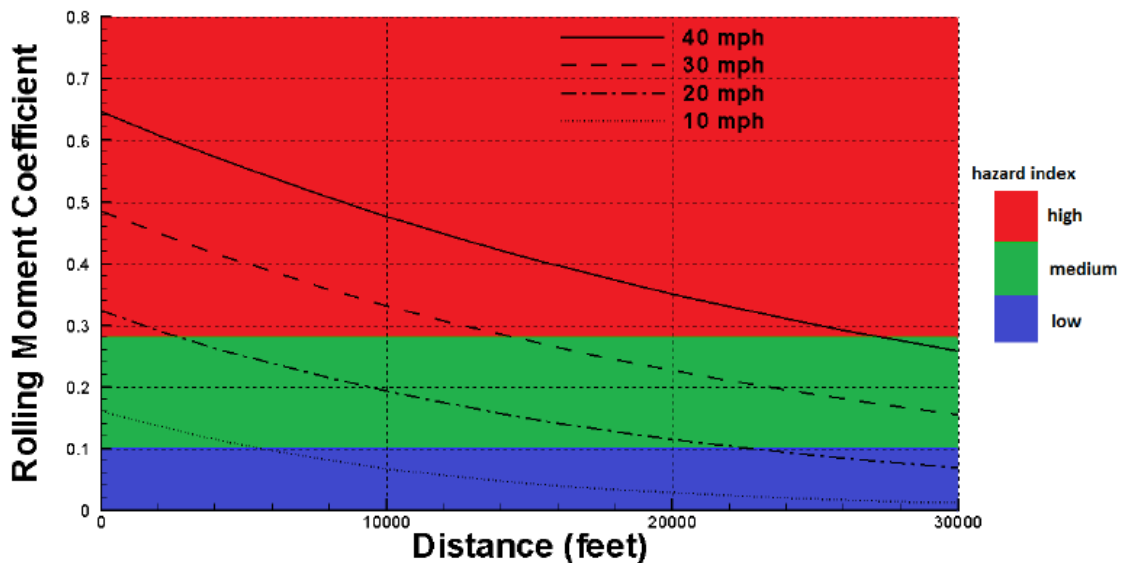


FIGURE E.1
Rolling Moment Coefficient Decay with Distance

We also encourage the committee to clarify the definition of the term “Airport” in the bill. You may be familiar with a similar statute from 2015 in Oklahoma, Senate Bill 808. Because of their loose definition of airport, the passage of this bill led to a “boom” of registered airports. These airports were, of course,

being registered with the FAA for the sole purpose of landowners keeping wind turbine development away from their homes. We support the separation of wind turbine development only from legitimate established airports. Two of our states established soaring operations are based at private airfields. We would suggest that you apply this law to any private or public airport that has been established before the law takes effect.

Soaring flight is flight without an engine to pull you through the air. Our unpowered sailplanes occasionally make landings off airport as a result of this. Many of the farm fields that we currently use as safe landing sites will be affected by future wind turbine development. For this reason we strongly support the inclusion of legitimate established private airports in the setback law. This will help preserve safe landing options for our pilots around the state.

Kansas is a state with an incredibly well developed aviation system. Many airports have runways well over a mile long. Some like Topeka and Salina have runways over 2 miles long. Sunflower Gliderport was a Naval Air Station in WWII and has a 7000 ft long runway. For this reason we recommend that the setback distance be from the end of any runway rather than the official center point of the airport.

I would like to thank for your time and attention to this matter and thank you for taking the time to receive our testimony.

Sincerely,

Tony Condon

President – Kansas Soaring Association

References:

KU Study:

<http://dmsweb.ksdot.org/AppNetProd/docpop/docpop.aspx?clienttype=html&docid=9011677>

Oklahoma Senate Bill 808:

http://webserver1.lsb.state.ok.us/cf_pdf/2015-16%20ENR/SB/SB808%20ENR.PDF