

I am Ron Hirst, 1508 W. Blanchard, South Hutchinson, Ks. I am here as an individual who has done fairly extensive research on wind energy conversion systems. While I am a Reno County commissioner, I am not here as a representative of the Reno County Commission or any other government entity of Reno County, acting only as an individual citizen of Reno County.

I support this bill because it gives protection to already existing family homes and future growth of tax base while at the same time giving flexibility to both home owners and wind energy conversion companies. A home owner who enjoys the rural lifestyle, rural environment and rural skyline can maintain some of those qualities. A home owner or property owner who wants to gain production value or waiver their rights may sign an Easement of Gross or a specific waiver to allow a conversion system to be placed on their property or nearby. I would like to comment on four selected portions of HB2273.

Section (1), Paragraph (b) Item (1) Distance from a residence or public building

You will hear from some that the distances from a residential home is too great. This distance allows a family who has a child with ASD to continue to live in their home without moving. The CDC has stated that 1 in 59 families will have someone with ASD. There have been many studies in 6 countries including the US showing a certain percent of people living within 2 kilometers, minimum of 1.26 miles, having inner ear visceral vibratory vestibular disturbance problems from LNF and ISP. While these studies have long been discounted by the wind companies, all the studies, including from Dr. Pierpont, an American Academy Fellow in Pediatrics, say more studies need to be done to fully verify her 5 year findings. I heard a wind company representative agree that there are some individuals having health problems but not enough studies have been completed to verify the cause. Not all individuals living near a wind turbine will be affected.

Having a 1.5 mile distance from a turbine will also partly mitigate shadow flicker. This distance will also decrease the time the energy company has to halt electric generation to provide no shadow flicker to a residence during either or both morning and evening household disruption of everyday life. NextEra has promised to shut down turbines for a period of time to not have shadow flicker on a home site. Ice throw from the blades and blade disintegration is also a consideration for safety in distance..

Section (1) paragraph (b), Item (2) Distance from Airports

Pratt has 8 miles from their airport. Hutchinson has 5 miles. HABIT, an old Navy Air Base in Yoder has national gliding meets as I am sure there are others around the state. Rural private air strips are sometimes used as staging for aerial crop spraying as well as fly-ins. Oklahoma State University has completed a study on the turbulence created by a wind turbine showing that air is moved 1,500 feet upward. Some aerial sprayers are charging more for spraying fields that contain turbines and have other restrictions before they will spray a crop around wind towers. This 3 mile restriction would standardize with what I understand is FAA regulations from airports.

Section (1) Paragraph (b) Item (3) Distance Form a Wildlife Managed Area

Up until now the Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism has only recommended a 3 mile setback from property owned or managed by KWP&T. This is only a recommendation and is and can be ignored by a wind energy conversion company. Due to the overwintering of bald eagles in many areas of Kansas specifically around wildlife managed areas and including migratory birds, which some are protected, that are seen in great amounts in Kansas around managed wildlife areas, this 3 mile limit should be made a regulation, not just a recommendation.

Section (1) Paragraph (C) Waiver of Rights

This paragraph gives a property owner options to wave setback distances and gives the energy company the ability to request a waiver from a property owner.

This bill contains language that brings the wind energy conversion towers into today's world by protecting rural, non-industry skyline by using infrared and/or radar detection on the towers to turn on warning lights when an aircraft is within a specific distance. I understand this is now being used in some localities.

Thank you for your time and opportunity to present my reasons for passing this bill out of committee. HB 2273 allows protection for property owners, flexibility for both wind energy conversion system companies and home owners while maintaining local government options.

Signed,

Ron Hirst, as a private citizen