



Cromwell
SOLAR

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Chairman Masterson and Committee Members,

My name is Scott White and I am here representing Cromwell Solar, one of the oldest and largest Kansas-based solar installers. Cromwell Solar supports SB 124, The Energy Fairness Act, and encourages you to support it.

Since the early 1980's, our company has grown from an environmental remediation company with a handful of employees that occasionally installed solar panels, to one that employed more than 50 people in 2018, 40 of whom were directly involved with installing solar. Growing a business requires a lot of things, but predictable, fair regulations are imperative. When public policy changes – such as those made by the KCC this past year - are designed for the sole purpose of making markets disappear, it makes growth very difficult.

Like any business, we are used to evolving our marketing strategies, but when you know that public policy approved by the State regulatory body of sanctioned monopolies is the sole reason for these changes it is aggravating and infuriating. The Residential Solar market made up more than half of our in-house sales (based on solar capacity) just two years ago. This past year it was down to one-fifth with our lowest total installs and installed capacity since 2013. The rate cases and threat of Demand Charges spooked the Residential market due to demand being a metric the vast majority of people do not understand NOR one that the utilities shared with their customer in advance of proposing the charge.

The KCC claims it can only consider the material impact on the utilities when changing tariffs. While that MAY be true for them, it certain isn't true for the Legislature. As Legislators, you can look at how a policy impacts the entire state, our society as a whole and focus on the big picture and not just state-sanctioned monopolies shareholder profits.

Distributed Generation makes our grid and our state more resilient. Allowing the utilities and their regulators to punish people who invest their own money into becoming more energy independent and resilient doesn't help the state as a whole. Please remember that the Net Metering laws passed by the Legislature in 2009 and again tweaked in 2014, provided a safety net for the utilities by limiting net metered DG systems to 1% of the utilities peak capacity. We are only at 1/5th of that right now – and were less than 1/10th when Westar first started pushing for punitive rates.

A stable and growing job solar job market in Kansas will need to have a robust Residential market. We want to hire more installers and grow. Passing the Energy Fairness Act will be a strong first step toward that goal.

Thank you,

Scott White

Research and Project Analyst, Cromwell Solar