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When I was contacted about telling the story of my wind turbine journey I was not sure how to go about telling you the myriad of emotions I walked through as I learned just how heartless and dirty the wind industry is.

My journey began in October 2019 when a friend posted an article about this industry coming to the county. I was curious but didn't know at the time all that I would learn from that day forward. I began reading up on the industry. I will admit some sites were sensational, no matter what side of the issue you fall on, other sites in complete denial of what this industry has done and continues to do to people's lives.

When I was asked if I'd be willing to write my story I was willing, but putting down in words everything that happened during that time seemed impossible. How can I communicate what others have not experienced? How do I make clear the wind industry comes in under the guise of helping landowners but ends up pitting neighbor against neighbor. People who have lived next to one another for generations became secretive and down right unfriendly. You see the wind industry cares about one thing only, subsidies. If there weren't wind energy subsidies there wouldn't be a wind industry, as Warren Buffett has now famously stated. The money is in the subsidies not the production of energy. If the days of February 12-17 2021 have taught us anything it is that this industry is woefully lacking on so many levels.

A small team formed and we attended our first county commission meeting on December 3rd 2019. Seeing as we had no clue how the meetings are run we sat and listened through the whole meeting waiting for an opportunity to ask questions. At the time there was no time for public comment so my friend finally just butted in with a, what are you doing about these wind turbines, type of question. We were quickly shut down and told we needed to be on the agenda to speak. We got on the agenda every week, as did many others when the citizens began to learn what was coming to our county.

We tried to educate as well as press the commissioners as to when they first knew the industry was coming into the county. They were not receptive to our education efforts and the story changed as to when they first knew when the industry was in the county. We soon discovered that the wind company had been in the county for at least two years and had already signed approximately 20 leases with land holders. By the time all was said and done approximately 47 leases were signed encompassing approximately 43,000 acres. We also discovered that our commissioners were downright afraid to question much of what the wind company asked for which resulted in the worst contracts in the area.

You see Bourbon County is a non zoned county and when the wind company came flashing their easy money promises, big city lawyers, and strong arm tactics our commissioners caved in a hot minute. It is past time for the state to impose some type of regulations on wind and solar

development. Especially since non zoned counties are easy prey. The mantra “ we can’t tell landowners what they can and cannot do on their own land” was repeated loud and often. This attitude can be a blessing and a curse. Especially when the non leaseholders did not ever think they'd have to live with a wind turbine out their back door. But what our commissioners failed to do was protect those landowners that did not want to see the desecration of the landscape that Kansas is famous for. Easements were set, road use agreements signed with very little negotiation. Our commissioners were strongly urged on more than one occasion to spend county money and find a lawyer that understood the wind industry and would help them fight for the best contracts possible in order to protect all. Our commissioners were convinced that our county counselor could handle the job. However, in the opinion of many, neither the county counselor or commissioners gave little effort to protect those that found it difficult to speak for themselves. Our local government failed.

So what is my story? It is this. I learned more about the wind industry than I cared to know before. I watched neighbors not able to do the neighborly thing anymore. I stepped in to stand up for those non leaseholders who found it beyond difficult to speak for themselves for fear of retaliation from lifelong neighbors and friends.

Our small team pushed hard to get our commissioners to do their own research. If they did it wasn't evident. Our commissioners signed pitiful lease agreements in fear of litigation from an industry that pretends to provide opportunity. Our commissioners will not admit they signed under duress but we all saw their shaking hands as they signed away the use of all our roads in the county, agreed to laughable PILOT and yearly payouts, and pitiful decommissioning agreements

Wind industry companies come in with their high paid lawyers and present a front that is immediately intimidating. It is too much for hometown folks to stand up against much less stomach.

In our case it appears that the wind company came in in 2016 and had lease holders by 2017. Our community as a whole was not aware of this until October of 2019. The commissioners signed contracts on March 13, 2020.

I do not know how the wind company found their way to our county but it appears that initial contact was made to a very large landowner who then either talked to other landowners trying to convince them that this is the proverbial pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Or said landowner gave names to the wind company. This representative then would tell landowners that all your neighbors signed you should too. I have documented accounts that most non leaseholders knew nothing of the presence of the wind company until October of 2019. Wind companies know that landowners, especially farmers and ranchers are struggling. Wind companies play to those sympathies with promises that this would add revenue to an otherwise hurting family.

This is not about non leaseholders not getting a part of the pie. It is about the divisive nature that the wind industry brings to a community. It's about having dreams and now those dreams,

in some cases at least, put on hold if not dashed altogether. In one case a couple had just built a basement for their dream home. There is still a hole in the ground. There will be turbines surrounding them.

When we began to question what was going on it became evident that we were probably too late in persuading our commissioners to not sign the agreements. In short it was a done deal. Doubly so as we are a non zoned county and we were summarily told on several occasions that because we are non zoned the commissioners had no right to stop this development and the wind company would build with or without the counties cooperation. I believe our county was targeted because we are not zoned. You see our county is on the very edge of what the industry calls "good wind." It really makes no sense to build here. It will not be profitable.

My plea to you is that something be put in place for counties to better navigate when an industry as large as this comes to town. County governments have moved beyond overseeing roads and bridges. The issues they have had to navigate in recent years were unimaginable ten years ago and they are ill equipped to handle. You have the power to help give our counties the ability to navigate the changing times in a way that will truly benefit all its citizens, not just those that care little for their neighbors. You can establish statewide regulations on setbacks, decibel allowances and starting figures on anything that has to do with money.

My story is not a new story. Go anywhere in the world where wind development is happening and my story is universal. All you have to do is change the names of the people and it's places and all the details remain the same.

Please, I beg you, stop the madness that is wind development before it has destroyed everything that is beautiful about Kansas.

I started my story with emotions, emotions that ran the gamut. On March 13, 2020, signing day, I experienced the most anger up to that point. You see we were promised two hours to look at the agreements. We were told we'd have to get them through a KORA request. Our commissioners could not even bring themselves to make a statement. They couldn't even stand up and face us. My anger was such that it was difficult to give an interview to a reporter that made sense. On August 25, 2020 Apex was back wanting to expand the footprint. The community did not know they were coming. Anger and frustration that our own commissioners couldn't be honest with us. In recent months I've been in contact with the project public liaison in order to stay informed about the progress of the project but also because there are non leaseholders that cannot bring themselves to do it. I will continue to remain the go between as long as I am needed. On February 2nd, 2021, I prepared another update for our county commissioners. It became almost impossible to do as a great sadness came over me in knowing that in a few short months citizens and now friends would have to endure the most egregious of acts, the ripping up of the landscape that they have come to love so much. And for what, greed, pure and simple.

One of the responsibilities of government is to protect the people. Please stand up and do just that.