

February 27, 2021

Dear Utilities Committee,

What I have experienced over the past 13 months is something no Kansas farmer and/or landowner should have to deal with. I live one mile from where I grew up. Aside from my last two years of college, I have lived here my entire life. My family operates a 350-head registered cow/calf operation. My daughter and I are the third and fourth generation to work on this land. My 17-year-old has hopes to take over the family farm after college. We live in the footprint of the wind power plant that is soon to start construction, which means our entire livelihood is at stake.

Like many rural communities in Kansas, we have been enduring the wrath of a wind turbine company wanting to invade and overtake our land. I would like to share my family's experiences with you.

The fought began in Nov. 2019 shortly after those of us living in the area heard about it via Facebook and learned what was going on. Since I rent most of my pasture from my parents and don't technically own a large amount of acreage, I was never approached by Apex to lease with them. My parents, both in their mid-70's, were approached by Apex however. Apex contacted them back in 2016. Even though there was no doubt in their minds – they were absolutely not signing the rights of their land to anyone, they wanted their ag lawyer to look over the contract. And the reaction of the lawyer proved just how scandalous this company and other wind companies are. Being older and not knowledgeable of the wind industry, my parents just put this in the back of their minds, until it came to public light four years later.

After I became aware of what was going on in Bourbon County, I soon joined the opposition group in Dec. 2019. I started attending every county commission meeting, and I dug deep to find my own research on these monstrosities. For a while, I like so many others in the county, really believed we could fight this. Unfortunately, it was all a waste of time. It was already a done-deal with our county commissioners.

Bourbon County has three county commissioners. It became apparent early on that the commissioners had no true concern for what the citizens of Bourbon County were saying. Once citizens showed interest in speaking at meetings, they implemented a limit on how many citizens could speak at meetings and each had a short, limited amount of time to speak. If questions were asked to commissioners, they would ignore the question, not answer anything at all. On more than one occasion, one of the commissioners could be seen on his phone during the meeting while citizens were speaking against the wind turbines. The youth in our 4-H club know how to properly conduct a meeting and show professionalism more than these three.

Bourbon County is like our neighboring county, Neosho County. Apex searches for counties in which there is one landowner that owns a large percent of the land in the footprint. This person does not care about what happens to Bourbon County. He and his family are move-ins. It became very clear though that Apex was in tight with him. In fact, he just recently built a shower house and camper hookups for the construction workers on his property. Connecting with this one large landowner is the wind turbine company's ticket into any given county. Here in Bourbon County, this landowner even assisted Apex in

getting leases signed. Besides my parents, I have documentation from two neighbors that this land owner came to their houses trying to persuade them to sign a lease with Apex. How is this ethical and right? More importantly, what is he getting out of it?

For me, it wasn't until everything came to the public eye in Nov. 2019 that I realized I could potentially be surrounded on three sides by wind turbines – thanks to my neighbors. Thankfully, my parents own the land to the south of me. These neighbors who signed leases with Apex are people I have known all of my life. Now there are hard feelings.

I soon became an advocate against this project. The more I researched wind turbines, the more I quickly learned there is more to dislike about these monstrosities than just the ugliness they put in the sky. I broke ground soon after Christmas 2019 to build a new house. You see, this is a huge deal since the house my daughter and I live in has so many structural problems. We've continued to live in it since the divorce 16 years ago, and I was finally able to do something different. I began talking with my contractor in March 2019. I immediately got on his waitlist. The basement hole was dug in Dec. 2019. Thankfully, it started raining a lot and he didn't get any farther. Then, I put construction on hold on Feb. 26, 2020, to see if these turbines are going in and how close to my house. I knew that I may not want to live here anymore. In fact, I may not be able to. My daughter and I both suffer from migraines, which is one of the many documented health problems associated with wind turbines. I also get motion sickness easily, and watching the ones spin while driving north out of Moran on Hwy. 59 or east out of Pittsburg on Hwy. 160 makes me nauseous – not to mention the shadow flicker they cause.

As far as the county commissioners, I received a letter from the one in my district in Jan. 2020 just letting me know of the possibility of the wind turbine power plant coming to where I live. He offered me to call, e:mail, or visit in-person with him about the issue. I called him immediately. It was more of me listening to him about his experience being an engineer than anything else. I felt like it was a waste of my time. My parents live one mile from me and never received a letter from him. I gave them his phone number and my mom called and visited with him also. I know she talked to him on one or two other occasions also.

I wrote a letter to all three commissions on March 2, 2020. I received the response of, "Thank you Janet. Seems like our greatest RISK is being realized..." from above said commissioner. That was it. I heard nothing from the other two commissioners.

The following four points are excerpts I talked about at that time in the letter I sent to the three commissioners:

Dividing the community. This is ALREADY HAPPENING, and these things aren't even here. I'm in my 10th year serving as the volunteer community leader of the Hiattville 4-H Club. We have an enrollment of 32 members, and are a very active club in the county. We do a lot of community service around Hiattville and in the town of Fort Scott. These proposed wind turbines are already causing problems in our successful club. After our monthly meetings when the 4-Hers are having recreation and refreshments, parents always stand around and visit. There was no visiting going on at the February 2020 meeting. When you have three families in the club that have signed with Apex, having good relations between families is impossible, even if it is a youth organization.

Neighbors against neighbors. ALREADY HAPPENING. I've lived two miles from Hiattville my entire 46 years, and I've never seen such hard feelings among people in this close-knit community.

Youth against youth. ALREADY HAPPENING. My 17-year-old daughter informs me from her lunch hour at school one day that the wind turbines are causing tension among friends and classmates in her ag class at school. They know how their parents feel about this issue and why.

Dividing the church. Thankfully I attend church in Fort Scott, and don't have to see this one first-hand. But when the average attendance at the Hiattville United Methodist Church is 25, how do you see this working out?

The other personal dealings my parents and I had with the commissioner from our district was the night before they voted on the turbines. My mom called me to let me know that this commissioner was at their house to visit. She told him I would want to be included also. So, he had no intentions of including me. I've always wondered if he was up to something since my parents are elderly – if he was trying to get them to sign something. That evening, my parents, my 17-year-old, and I sat and talked with said commissioner for 2 ½ hours. I made it very clear that a 1,400-foot setback from my house is not far enough! I said multiple times that it should at least be a minimum of one mile. I said this over and over to him. He even had me write it in his notebook. I think because he thought then I would keep quiet about it then. We got to hear a lot about his life as an engineer – he even wore his Kiewit shirt. I kept asking questions that he kept sidestepping for more than two hours. Afterwards, my daughter even asked me if I thought he got it, and she agreed, nope! The next day at the commission meeting he wouldn't even look at me. He voted "yes" on all three parts of the contract with Apex. March 13, 2020, was a day I will never forget. After all of the work for the past three months, it felt like nobody cared. The above commissioner brought his wife and two college-aged kids for the signing of the contracts. He put on quite the show. He sat up there with one of the other commissioners and laughed while signing the contracts.

I did have one contact with an Apex representative. His name is Chris Knapp. The only reason I met with him is that my former high school ag teacher asked me to join him in this meeting since I was building a house. My teacher had spoken at one of the commission meetings and Chris asked to meet with him afterward. I reluctantly went. This was on Feb. 26, 2020. I explained my house situation and that I would like to know where the turbines will be going once a map comes out. I didn't want to lose my contractor, but yet needed to know if where the basement hole was now dug wasn't going to work for me. I have neighbors on three sides of me that had signed leases with Apex. I heard nothing back from Chris until Aug. 3, 2020, and his excuse for no map yet was COVID. The last I've heard from him was Aug. 12, 2020, promising to get me a map of the area around my house. I'm sure I will never hear from him again.

Fast forward to today. The two of our commissions that were up for re-election were voted out. We were all hoping the two new ones would do better, but they gave Apex an extension to the footprint recently. Our commissions (old and new) have communicated absolutely nothing to those of us that will be forced to live in the footprint of this wind power plant and have to endure all of the negative effects. The only way my family has remained in the loop as to what is going on is one lady in our opposition group regularly meets with the public liaison for Apex and reports back to me. She presents updates to the county commission meetings, but the commissions usually don't seem to care and have no questions for her. If it wasn't for her concern and love for the county, we would not know anything that was going on. Our commissioners should be getting updates and reporting at the meetings. They are

not. They should also be reaching out to those that are being forced to live in the footprint with an update, but they have not.

We need help from the state. We were sold out by our commissioners. I believe they knew from the start that they were going to sign the contracts with Apex. Now our way of life will never be the same. The beautiful pastures with amazing sunsets will never be the same. And what about the pasture and cropland that is being destroyed for this so-called "green energy". You take the amount of land that is being destroyed in Kansas and then add that with the amount from all of the other states, that adds up. My daughter wants to take over the family farm someday and be the fourth generation on this land. But what will be left around this area? Will she even want to live with these things when they start falling down around her? What a sight that will be.

My opinion of Kansas has changed over this past year and not in a good way. The majority of us landowners do not want these things in our back door. Please help us!

Janet Beene