

Dorothy Barnett
Climate + Energy Project
Oral Opposition Testimony
SB 279

Dear Chairman Thompson and Committee members, thank you for allowing me to speak today. I am opposed to SB 279. Not only do I direct the Climate + Energy Project, a strong proponent for clean energy in Kansas, but I am also a resident of Reno County, home to the Siemens Gamesa wind turbine manufacturing facility that the state enthusiastically supported in 2008.

SB 279 presents many economic consequences for Kansas. We can't afford to pass this bill. Frankly, just having the conversation about this bill is unsettling for the message it sends to folks looking to do business in Kansas. We've built an incredible economic resource for farmers, counties, and businesses through wind investments and the interest in wind power is only increasing. Kansas has a diverse energy portfolio and wind is a critical component of our makeup. We can't afford state government interference in energy choices; wind projects should continue to be negotiated at the local level, by locally elected planning commissions and elected leaders.

The Senate is a deliberative body. A place where we often bring parties together to find common ground and forge ahead with solutions that meet the needs of all engaged. Yet in regards to wind, I'm concerned we're increasingly giving consideration only to the anti-wind voices without regard for the hundreds of employees at Siemens Gamesa, the landowners who have signed leases for wind turbines, the increased business traffic in local businesses (diners, hotels, etc.) during the construction of a wind farm, and the millions of dollars wind farms bring to county budgets.

I think there's benefit to some historical context of our wind investments, especially since many of you are new to this committee.

Kansas has had wind projects for 20 years. Reno County began exploring wind energy more than 14 years ago with the creation of the Reno County Wind Energy Taskforce. While the task force was not directly involved in bringing Siemens Gamesa to Hutchinson, the work we did leading up to the announcement was certainly helpful in gaining public support for the project. The state has a long history of support for wind power in Kansas. We have seen the economic impact first hand, with the more than \$14 billion dollars in capital investments all across Kansas.

For more than 14 years my work with the Climate + Energy Project has taken me all over the state. I have heard first hand from landowners and communities, including Chambers, Commissioners and economic development professionals about the benefits they have received from hosting wind turbines. This work has included involvement in community meetings and public hearings about wind projects. The misinformation campaigns don't match with the reality of what's happening in our local Kansas communities. There are countless testimonies to the economic and environmental benefits and no stories about impacts to health and safety at any of the 40 operating Kansas projects.

Some of these folks have shared their personal stories in written testimony you've received and I hope you'll take the time to read their input. I'm still struck by the story of Alan, a farmer in Kingman County who missed out on a sizable amount of money because folks outside the project area harassed the developer so much they moved the project. How fair is it that he was unable to use his land the way he wanted because his neighbors didn't like wind energy? Where is our consideration for property rights?

I urge you to not be fooled by the misinformation you have heard and instead talk to you constituents who have operating wind farms on their land and around their communities. Vote no on SB 279.