

Kansas Senate Committee on Utilities
Proponent Testimony: SB 478

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Dear Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Francisco, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Margy Stewart, and I am delighted to support SB 478.

SB 478 is an excellently crafted bill that would provide some relief to rural residents, tourism promoters, and visitors to rural Kansas. It would also reduce the damage which light pollution currently inflicts on wildlife.

In preparation for journalistic projects, I have been communicating with residents of counties that currently host industrial wind facilities. The non-stop flashing lights is one of the irritations that people complain about the most. They hate being robbed of the night sky, the stars, and moon. For them as for people throughout millennia, the "heavens" hold spiritual value, as a wondrous gift, unending beauty, the awe-inspiring reality of creation.

For years my husband and I hosted eco-tourists on our ranch, and we still invite the public for star-gazings and meteor-watch parties. People come to our land to experience the night sky.

It is a precious thing, and people yearn for the experience of it. Now in other parts of Kansas, because of constantly flashing lights, our rural residents are mourning the loss the night sky. Visitors to rural Kansas bemoan the defacement of our landscape. But this bill would give residents and visitors some relief. For a few hours each night they could again enjoy the night sky.

Since I have testified before this committee before, you know that I am a wildlife advocate, and I ask you to support SB478 for the sake of our precious ecosystems. Light pollution is disruptive of all creatures that evolved to respond to a day-night cycle, birds and invertebrates in particular. Light pollution is cited as a main contributor to the "insect apocalypse," as worrisome declines in insect populations are called, and therefore a contributor to the declines in the bird and fish species that starve in the absence of insects.

It would cost wind companies some money to abide by SB478, but are their profits our only concern? Where does their money come from if not from public subsidies?

To me it is shocking that wind companies take the public's money but resist simple steps to be good neighbors, to people and to wildlife. "Green" shouldn't mean "mean, " and it shouldn't

mean dollar bills over our fellow creatures.

In return for our tax dollars, these developers owe the public the simple accommodations embodied in SB478.

Thank you for your consideration. Best wishes to you all!

Sincerely yours,

Margy Stewart

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