

February 9, 2023
SB 68
Oral In-Person
OPPONENT



From: Jessica Lucas, Clean Energy Business Council

Chairman Olson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to present opposition testimony on behalf of the Clean Energy Business Council a project of the Climate + Energy Project. CEP is a fifteen-year-old Kansas based nonprofit working to support the transition to a carbon free economy through programs and policy.

Kansas wind energy has been great for our economy and environment. To have continued wind and solar investments, we need a transmission grid that is prepared for the future of clean energy.

Passing this Right of First Refusal (ROFR) bill will have a negative impact on our ability as a state to cost effectively prepare for the clean energy transformation. The ROFR discussion is happening across the country at both the state and federal level. When the Federal Regulatory Commission passed Order 1000, it was with the idea that opening transmission lines to competition would increase transmission access and reduce costs.

Cost effective transmission for clean energy is possible without ROFR.

The ROFR backlash has undermined interstate cooperation in developing regional transmission projects, that could bring Kansas wind and solar resources to new markets, especially in the Midwest. For example, the state of Illinois began to resist paying for the burdens of other states' anti-competitive transmission laws over a decade ago. In deterring regional transmission, ROFR has forced states to forego reliability and economic development benefits. Utilities often circumvent efficient regional projects by breaking up the project into smaller and costlier pieces, so they don't have to bid on the projects.

With billions of federal dollars in loans, grants, and other forms of financial assistance to support transmission projects, now is not the time to make it harder for transmission lines to be built. The Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act have billions of dollars for transmission infrastructure owners and developers including grid resilience grants, transmission facility financing and other programs. Information can be found about these programs online at CleanEnergyGrid.org.

To prevent further price increases and ensure a robust clean energy future, Kansas must maintain the right of competition and transparency. Please oppose this bill.