



DATE: February 23, 2021

TO: House Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications

ATTN: Chairman Seiwert and Members of the Committee

FROM: Metropolitan Energy Center
Kelly Gilbert, Executive Director & KC Reg. Clean Cities Coordinator
Emily Wolfe, Sr. Program Coordinator & Policy Analyst

RE: Testimony on HOUSE BILL No. 2381

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HOUSE BILL No. 2381. We are with Metropolitan Energy Center (MEC), a nonprofit organization with a 38-year history of transforming energy use in the building and transportation sectors in the Kansas City region and beyond.

We all use energy in our everyday lives, whether to cook and clean, to cool and heat our homes, or to charge our phones. It is also the way our food makes it to our plates and how our kids make it to school. We have highlighted below why it is critical for Kansas, [1 of 8 states in the U.S. without a statewide energy plan](#), to establish a task force to develop a comprehensive state energy plan.

- **Compared to other states, Kansas lags in its efforts to conserve energy:** [ACEEE's 2020 State Energy Efficiency Scorecard](#) ranked U.S. states on their policy and program efforts to save energy. Overall, Kansas ranked 47th in the report. It received an individual score of 0.5 on the 20-point scale for utilities and public benefits, and 1 on the six-point scale for state government initiatives. The scorecard demonstrates that there are significant opportunities for Kansas to improve its energy efficiency policies.
- **Transportation is a significant user of our energy resources, and the industry is undergoing a dramatic change:** [In 2019, transportation was the second-largest energy-consuming sector in Kansas](#). The state energy plan should address the energy efficiency of individual vehicles and our transportation system as a whole. It should also include policies to prepare us for increased electrification of vehicles – one of the fastest-growing alternative fuels. For example, the plan should direct KDOT and KDHE to incorporate clean alternative fuels into its fleets when possible, incentivize growth for electric vehicle fueling infrastructure, and assist agencies impacted by reduced tax income due to fuel efficiency standards and hybrid and electric vehicles.
- **We are missing an opportunity to draw down additional federal dollars:** The [State Energy Program \(SEP\)](#), part of the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), provides funding and technical assistance to advance state-led energy

initiatives. Since 2017, SEP has provided more than \$203 million to State Energy Office activities that resulted in reduced energy costs, increased economic competitiveness, and coordinated energy-related emergency preparedness. Without a state energy plan, Kansas is missing out on critical funding opportunities and assistance from national experts.

- **Kansans want clean, reliable, and affordable energy:** More than ever, people are painfully learning that the air you breathe or access to reliable energy can be a life-or-death issue. The [Yale Climate Opinion Map](#) estimates 86% of adults in Kansas support funding research into renewable energy. Kansans are also aware that access to reliable energy comes at a cost. [Kansas has the seventh highest utility costs in the nation with the typical family spending almost 29% of their total housing costs on utility bills per month](#). By developing an actionable, comprehensive plan, we can work together, and with residents, to meet our state's energy needs in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.
- **We need to capitalize on Kansas' economic potential and previous successes:** [In 2019, Kansas ranked among the top five states in total wind energy generation and had the second-largest share of electricity generated from wind](#). For farmers and ranchers with turbines on their land or those who are close enough to receive a "good neighbor" payment, wind generation provides a financial boost when grappling with drought, floods, and the ever-fluctuating price of the crops and livestock they produce. This is one example of how we can maximize our local resources to benefit our state economy and become a national leader in energy innovation.

We thank you for the invaluable work you do for our state, especially during this extraordinary time, and for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HOUSE BILL No. 2381.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have questions or need additional information.

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