

5 February 2023

Committee Members:

I would like to express my support for HB2227 and HB2228.

I am a retired electrical engineer who spent many years doing telecomm design work for electrical utilities, and am a strong proponent of robust and well-interconnected utilities. I am also somewhat sympathetic to their assertions that allowing customers to generate their own power cuts into their revenue and thus detracts from their ability to maintain their T&D networks.

However, electrical utility's current business model has remained essentially unchanged since the very beginning of the industry, where the energy distributor also holds a monopoly on its production. That made sense 100 years ago, when generation of electrical power was comparatively difficult, expensive, and dangerous. Times are different now. Technology has made it is easy, cheap, and safe for individual residences and businesses to generate their own power. Allowing them to do so while remaining connected to the electrical grid lowers net energy costs and has the potential to increase overall system reliability and reduce system infrastructure requirements by distributing generation across a wider area.

Electrical utilities are notorious for being slow to adopt new technologies and methods, often for good reasons, but I believe in this case out of convenience and because regulation of the industry protects them from having to adapt to market forces that would otherwise induce progress and innovation.

I believe electrical utilities (both here in Kansas and elsewhere) should not only allow but encourage private generation of electrical power, for the good of both their customers and of the electrical grid itself. In addition, utilities should not seek to be protected monopolists of electrical energy. Rather, their function should principally be the operator of the grid and arbiter of the energy producers and consumers on it, with their charges based on services rendered.

I view both HB 2227 and HB 2228 as small first steps toward that end and therefore support their passage.

Thank you.
John Flavin
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