

Dorothy Barnett
Climate + Energy Project
HB 2156
Proponent



Chairman Delperdang and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my support for HB 2156.

My name is Dorothy Barnett, I direct the Climate + Energy Project (CEP), a fifteen-year-old Kansas based nonprofit. CEP works to support the transition to a carbon free economy through programs and policy. Energy efficiency is not only good for our economy but good for our health and environment as well.

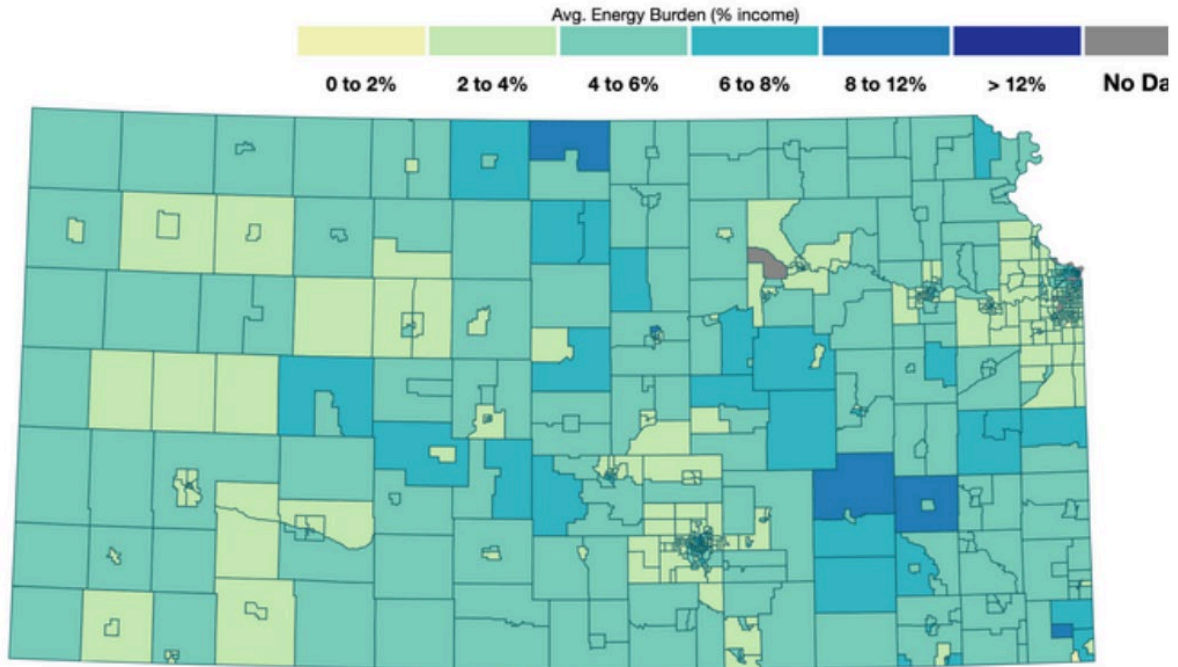
More than three in 10 households in the United States have difficulty paying for energy bills¹. Such households are known as “energy insecure”. To make matters worse, research shows that even more households practice what is known as “energy limiting behavior”, in which they alter their energy consumption to avoid excessive bills in a way that causes harm to their health. This includes practices such as lowering heating temperature set points to dangerously low levels in the wintertime, for example. Some who cannot pay their bills receive a shut-off notice and some are unable to use essential heating and cooling services.

Better rate designs can help alleviate the burden of energy bill payments for low-income residents. A variety of programs exist outside of the rate design process to alleviate energy burdens, most notably the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). However, significant gaps exist in who can leverage the benefits from these programs. Rate design, and specifically integration of a low-income discount rate, can provide direct relief to low-income residents. This legislation is the first step to provide relief to our fellow Kansans.

While the average energy burden in Kansas is just 3% many Kansans experience an energy burden of more than twice that average. Some Kansans have an energy burden of up to more than 9% (Sedgwick Co), 10% (Douglas and Saline Counties) or 12% (Wyandotte County) of their annual income.

Passing this bill is the first step to help those Kansans most in need. Thank you.

¹ U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). (2018, May 31). Residential energy consumption survey 2015. Table HC11.1: Household energy insecurity, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.eia.gov/consumption/residential/data/2015/hc/hc11.1.xlsx>; see also U.S. EIA. (2018, September 19). One in three U.S. households faces a challenge in meeting energy needs. Today in Energy. Retrieved from <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=37072>



Low-Income Energy Affordability Data Tool Map Export (<https://lead.openel.org/>)

Exported On: 12/12/2022

AMI: 0% - 30%, 30% - 60%, 60% - 80%, 80% - 100%, 100%+

Building Age: Before 1940, 1940 - 59, 1960 - 79, 1980 - 99, 2000 - 09, 2010+

Heating Fuel Type: Utility Gas, Bottled Gas, Electricity, Fuel Oil, Coal, Wood, Solar, Other, None

Building Type: 1 unit detached, 1 unit attached, 2 units, 3 - 4 units, 5 - 9 units, 10 - 19 units, 20 - 49 units, 50+ units, Boat/RV/Van, Mobile/Trailer

Rent/Own: Renter-occupied, Owner-occupied