



Kansans for Clean Energy



Testimony in Opposition to HB 2241
House Committee on Energy and Environment
February 14th, 2013

Chairman Hedke and Honorable Members of the Committee:

Kansans for Clean Energy is a broad coalition of agricultural, energy, environmental and faith-based groups from across the state. We thank you for the opportunity to express our opposition to House Bill 2241, which both delays our Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) in target year requirements, cancels the scheduled third increase in the Standard currently scheduled for 2020, and provides an exemption to such requirements by showing of “good cause.”

We consider this bill to be a solution without a problem, because the RPS has been a highly successful policy, bringing wide-ranging economic, social, and environmental benefits to Kansas. Wind farms benefit our entire state with an inexpensive, plentiful and clean energy source that keeps our air clean while neither consuming nor endangering enormous quantities of water like fossil fuel development.

For rural Kansans, the loss of economic growth opportunities is inconceivable. Wind farm donations to communities enable revenue-poor counties to maintain essential government services like education, law enforcement, roads, fire and much more. Payments to landowners give farmers a weatherproof income stream. These payments, as they are spent locally, enable rural main street businesses to rebuild. In Kingman and Harper counties, two new hotels have gone up. There is a new lay-down yard for transmission lines and both counties experienced increased sales tax revenue.

Population decline in rural Kansas is a serious issue. Legislators should place a higher value on the lost opportunities for economic development and job creation for rural Kansans caused by postponing or repealing RPS milestones. Our rural youth aren’t going to wait around in their communities for opportunities delayed by Kansas legislators; for them, opportunity delayed will be opportunity denied.

So when we have seen so many positive impacts, why would we want to slow down our state’s momentum?

By delaying and repealing the RPS requirements, this legislature sends the message that Kansas is not as serious as it once was about attracting new business and jobs, about improving our health and environmental quality, and about adding a plentiful, dependable and inexpensive energy resource that our children and grandchildren can rely on. HB 2241 also unnecessarily complicates our energy policy by introducing the spurious premise of excessive costs when we have seen no significant cost increases related to renewable energy. Above all, with HB 2241, Kansas would be first state in the country to go back on their original RPS commitment. That’s not the kind of leader we want to be.



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As people of faith, we know that stewardship of God's creation is one of our most sacred responsibilities, as is looking out for the health and well-being of our fellow Kansans. The development of the clean energy sector is an important element of this stewardship, and the RPS is the most effective policy we have to support the growth of that sector. And it doesn't cost state government a dime.

When we look at the full range of consequences of House Bill 2241, we have to ask the committee:

Do we really want to put our economic and environmental progress in jeopardy? Do we really want to say that plentiful, cheap, clean renewable energy is not part of our state's economic and environmental future? Do we want to create regulatory uncertainty, deterring business from considering Kansas a safe place to invest because government is no longer a reliable partner? Are we going to sit out the clean energy boom, while our neighbors like Texas and Iowa cash in?

Rather than cancelling a successful policy, why don't we instead consider expanding it? Dare we say - 30% by 2030?

In conclusion: the RPS works. There is no need for delay or repeal. When it comes to the RPS, we can take some good old fashioned, sensible Kansas advice: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Sincerely,

Kansans for Clean Energy

Our coalition includes:

- Climate and Energy Project
- Kansas Farmers Union
- Kansas Rural Center
- Kansas Interfaith Power & Light
- Kansas Natural Resource Council
- Kansas Sierra Club