

Testimony in Opposition to HB2373

Kansas needs ALL forms of energy for a STRONG STATE ECONOMY

by

Dr. Walt Chappell, Former President, Colorado Solar Manufacturers Association

Ending the RPS would be a major mistake and decrease our energy options for years to come.

Kansas has as much sun as Florida but more need for hot water and space heating. Our potential wind energy is 2nd in the nation. Yet we continue to “shoot ourselves in the foot” by making it difficult for solar and wind technologies to grow in our state.

However, right next door in Colorado, the solar industry is growing rapidly. It is a major contributor to their economy, jobs and available electricity. While I was President of the Colorado Solar Energy Industries Association, we added 3,000 new jobs and total sales of \$2 billion per year.

Why not Kansas?? Why not encourage all forms of energy to meet our current needs and that of future generations?? Once fossil fuels are gone—then what? Do we just sit in our homes and freeze to death? The Legislature does not need to “stick a finger in the eye” of every renewable energy investor.

Here are some examples of what the solar industry is doing in Colorado.

Solar Companies in Colorado

There are currently **360 solar companies** at work throughout the value chain in Colorado. These companies provide a wide variety of solar products and services ranging from solar system installations to the manufacturing of components used in photovoltaic panels. These companies can be broken down across the following categories: 37 manufacturers, 13 manufacturing facilities, 187 contractor/installers, 22 project developers, 28 distributors and 86 engaged in other solar activities including financing, engineering and legal support.

Colorado Solar Industry Facts <http://www.seia.org/state-solar-policy/colorado>

- The Colorado solar industry generates as much revenue as its top-ranked craft brewing industry.
- In 2013, Colorado **installed 56 MW of solar electric capacity**, ranking it 10th nationally.
- The **376 MW of solar energy currently installed** in Colorado ranks the state 8th in the country in installed solar capacity. There is enough solar energy installed in the state to power 68,600 homes.
- In 2013, **\$233 million was invested in Colorado** to install solar for home, business and utility use.
- Average installed residential and commercial photovoltaic system **prices in Colorado have fallen by 17% in the last year**. National prices also dropped steadily — by 8% from last year and 34% from 2010.

Notable Solar Installations in Colorado

- **San Luis Valley Solar Ranch** in Alamosa County was completed in 2011 by developer Iberdrola. This photovoltaic project has the capacity to generate 30 MW of electricity-- enough to power over 5,400 Colorado homes.
- At 30 MW, **Alamosa Solar Generating Project** is among the largest solar installations in Colorado. Completed in 2012 by Cogentrix, this concentrating photovoltaics project has enough electric capacity to power more than 5,400 homes.

There are efforts underway to build a 200 to 300MW concentrated solar electric generation facility in Western Kansas. Now that the high capacity grid has been upgraded by ITC and Westar, it is now feasible to add more solar and wind projects to produce electricity and sell it into the Southwest Power Pool. This solar project will generate electricity during the peak load, daylight hours and have the capacity to store energy for an additional 4-6 hours into the evening to help balance out the intermittent wind generated electricity.

In addition to this major new source of electricity where solar radiation is the strongest in Kansas, manufacturing and installation of components can be done by workers from Central and Eastern Kansas. Diversifying our state economy in all regions is essential to future jobs for our children and grandchildren.

If HB2373 is passed and the Kansas RPS are repealed, it will send a shockwave through the whole industry that Kansas does not want investments in more wind or solar. We will lose these new jobs and investments to other states and continue to be held captive to the ever increasing prices demanded by the coal and gas monopoly for our electricity.

According to the KCC, from 2009 to 2014, Westar Energy added \$538 million to its revenue stream through 22 rate increases. Over that same period, energy bills for residential users have increased 40 to 50 percent. Earlier this week, Westar Energy filed for another rate increase that would bring in an additional \$152 million a year. <http://kmuw.org/post/westar-energy-rate-increase-request-shows-shift-towards-flat-rate-fees>

The added cost of Kansas produced renewable electricity purchased by utility companies is less than 2% of these rate increases. Removing the RPS now, will not lower electrical bills or stop future demands for more money from consumers. However, it would definitely make it very difficult to create jobs, diversify our economy and supply of electricity in the future plus cause investors to take their money elsewhere.

For the sake of our children and future generations, I ask that you stop these legislative efforts to protect the coal and gas monopoly and send a resounding message to their lobbyists that Kansans will not put all of our energy "eggs in one basket". We need energy options if our economy is to grow plus keep the lights and heat on. Our State goal should be 25% renewable energy by 2025.

Please VOTE NO on any effort to repeal or "sunset" the Kansas RPS!

Respectfully submitted,



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