

Before the HOUSE ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT Committee
Presented by Zack Pistora, Kansas Sierra Club
Opposition to SB 318
February 17th, 2016



Chairman Hedke and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition of SB 318; which would abolish the Kansas Electric Transmission Authority (KETA) and halt all state planning for the Clean Power Plan.

KETA has been successful in its mission and has been productive for Kansas.

Since its creation in 2005, the Kansas Electric Transmission Authority has been responsible for planning and overseeing reliable operation of the electrical transmission system and expanding the Kansas economy through facilitating improvements in the state's electric transmission infrastructure for the delivery and use of Kansas energy. Prior to 2005, there had been no significant new construction of high-voltage transmission lines in the state for 22 years. On its own, the free market was lacking and electric utilities and transmission companies were failing to build the necessary new transmission capacity needed for large-scale energy distribution. But because KETA was created and government leadership was instilled, over 400 miles of 345kV transmission line has been completed since 2005. In the same timeframe, over 3000 MW of wind energy in our state has come online, which would not have happened without the enhanced transmission and electrical infrastructure capability that KETA is tasked with. The investment in in-state transmission has allowed investment in the billions of dollars and has created thousands of jobs in Kansas. This KETA-inspired wind project development, while impressive, doesn't begin to scratch the surface of the potential for additional tens of billions of dollars in wind projects in western Kansas.

KETA is a key player in discussion grid reliability and transmission matters, and holds our best interests in the Southwest Power Pool.

KETA helps represent our state's stake in the Southwest Power Pool, and without KETA, we lose our state's leading voice for Kansans in discussion of new energy concerns and transmission projects. Through its leadership, KETA has deliberated on several issues with the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), including SPP's new integrated marketplace, FERC Order 1000, and the Clean Power Plan. KETA plays a direct leadership role in developing transmission for energy export; a newer market that has not only benefitted the Kansas economy, but also the national energy supply. KETA's record of success demonstrates a standard of excellence in the state leadership we need between the private and public interests of a secure and economical energy infrastructure.

It would be a HUGE mistake to halt our progress on energy reliability, transmission capability, and planning for a new era energy system. Too much is at stake for Kansas.

As mentioned, Kansas has already realized the economic benefit of upgrading our energy transmission infrastructure with just a bit of governmental leadership and financial investment. The same success story could happen with our state planning a strategy for a 21st century energy portfolio to provide homegrown, clean power for ourselves and other states.

By 2030, the Kansas Department of Commerce estimates Kansas will export 7000 MW of wind energy to other states. Wind, solar, and other renewable energy sources present a real economic opportunity for our state. Our planning and leadership that enables greater transmission and energy production are absolutely

critical. We are talking about earning thousands of more jobs and billions more in economic investments gains if we act favorably to utilizing Kansas' best resources.

On the other hand, if we reverse course on supporting Kansas renewables, transmission, and state planning to comply with the Clean Power Plan, we have a lot to lose. To understand this, we need to zoom out and realize why the Clean Power Plan was even created and why transitioning to clean, renewable energy is so important: *answering our climate crisis*. Despite all the ignorance and propaganda coming from fossil fuel companies and their political puppets, Climate Change is real, it's happening, it's perpetuated by human industry, and it's impairing our world. Kansas has already been impacted by losses of life and economic damages of 25 separate billion-dollar weather disasters since 2010, according to the National Climatic Data Center of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/billions/mapping>). Of course, agriculture, a multi-billion dollar industry and our top enterprise in Kansas, is most susceptible to extreme weather patterns and climatic trends. While leaders across the world realize that the costs and risks of climate change continue to threaten our economy and quality of life, most are taking action to address one of the greatest challenges and responsibilities of our time. In contrast, SB 318 is suggesting Kansas leaders scrap planning for our future.

At a time when Kansas has great opportunity to lead the nation in renewable energy production and delivery, it would be foolish to abolish KETA, as well as our important state agencies' planning for Kansas to triumph in transitioning to a clean energy economy. Now is not the time to scale back our progress of a designing a state plan to address our ill-position of an outdated energy portfolio and our dependence on carbon-intensive coal from Wyoming. Rather, now is the best time to prepare our state to address climate change and to profit from maintaining a reliable energy grid, strong electrical transmission, and a robust usage and distribution of homegrown, clean energy.

Please do not withdrawal our state support for KETA, nor our ability to proceed in developing a state plan to have a cleaner, more responsible energy portfolio. Please oppose SB 318.

Sincerely,

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The Sierra Club is the largest grassroots environmental organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enjoying our great outdoors. The Kansas Chapter represents our state's strongest grassroots voice on environmental matters for more than forty years now.