

Senate Assessment & Taxation Committee, March 16, 2014
In Opposition to S.B. 257

Please oppose retroactively altering the property tax exemption, harming counties with existing donation agreement payments. The Buffalo Dunes wind facilities constructed in Grant, Haskell, and Finney Counties have provided a much-needed economic boost in Grant County.

As a rural county, Grant County has few large employers. Wind farms promote rural economic development by providing additional revenue to landowners and PILOT payments to the county to replace our diminishing stream of revenue. The investment in our county helps our communities grow.

The donation agreements from Buffalo Dunes flows right into our county's general fund to help keep our taxes lower. Additional donations agreements with Buffalo Dunes has allowed for the S.T.E.A.M. program in our community which develops art as well as math and science in our students.

Existing wind farms in Kansas designed their Power Purchase Agreements and PILOT payments with the lifetime property tax exemption in place. If existing wind farms, such as the Buffalo Dunes wind project, are required to start paying property taxes, it will significantly impact or void those PILOT payments.

These PILOT payments are helping us in the time of so many other losses. I truly believe the payments will help hold our community together.

On behalf of the people of Grant County, I ask you to consider this bill's impact to counties and their PILOT agreements under contract. Please assure that SB 257 it is not damaging to these 27 rural counties.

Kevin Shapland
County Commissioner
Ulysses, KS