

**Written Testimony of Westar Energy
Neutral
In Senate Natural Resources
SB 384
February 4, 2016**

Thank you Chairman Powell and members of the committee for considering Westar Energy's comments on SB 384.

For many years Westar Energy has been an active builder of transmission infrastructure in Kansas. This includes the construction of power lines and wind farms. Our activity has increased significantly in recent years with the Prairie Wind, Salina-to-Elm Creek, Jeffrey Energy Center-to-Manhattan, and Auburn-to-Manhattan transmission line projects.

Moreover, wind farm development, which we've been involved with for the last decade, continues to occur throughout central and western Kansas.

Using the Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool, and working with Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism staff, these very large projects, often with demanding, accelerated timetables, have consistently come in on budget and on time. Sensitive species and their associated habitats have been easy to identify, and conversation and negotiation with KDWPT personnel has yielded inexpensive options for compliance.

The Prairie Wind project, for example, had cost for compliance of approximately 0.03 percent of the total project cost. Knowing what actions are needed early on in a project is very important to the transmission development process. Because of our work with KDWPT on this project, we had that information early enough that it did not impact our construction schedule.

That is just one example of how Westar has been able to work efficiently and collaboratively with KDWPT to comply with sensitive species requirements. KDWPT performs an important service for Kansas in protecting these sensitive species, and Westar Energy believes the agency's ability to perform this service should not be impeded.

The process currently in place is sufficient and necessary, and it in no way substantively impedes or compromises Westar's ability to do business in Kansas.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on SB 384.