



**Testimony of Westar Energy, KCP&L
and Empire District Electric
Before the Senate Utilities Committee
In Support of SB 318
January 21, 2016**

Chairman Olson and members of the committee, Westar Energy, KCP&L and Empire District Electric are expressing our support today for SB 318.

The Kansas Electric Transmission Authority (KETA) formed ten years ago at a time when tariffs for assigning costs associated with transmission construction were being debated at the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Many, including Rep. Carl Holmes, believed Kansas needed a stronger transmission grid connecting eastern and western Kansas, but feared the absence of reasonable tariffs would strand Kansas generation. Rep. Holmes heard about a state infrastructure authority in Wyoming which could fund infrastructure improvements through the state. He brought that idea to Kansas and KETA was formed as a backstop funding authority for new transmission construction.

KETA has provided significant service to the state by promoting transmission in western Kansas, which in turn was vital to supporting wind development in the state. KETA has also provided a venue for citizens to voice their concerns to an organization located in Kansas.

However, now that regional tariffs have been approved by FERC, KETA's influence for getting transmission built in Kansas and within the SPP footprint has arguably been reduced. The SPP transmission planning process has evolved significantly since KETA's inception. These new processes have resulted in over \$8 billion of new transmission infrastructure either built or slated to be built within the SPP region. This process includes the SPP continuing to find ways to support significant wind development in western Kansas.

Again, we can't emphasize enough that KETA has provided a valuable service to Kansas during its existence. But with the changes that have occurred since its inception, we believe KETA's functions can now be assumed within the current transmission planning process in our region.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 318.