



PROPONENT TESTIMONY

House Bill 2703

Patrick Vogelsberg
Kansas Gas Service

House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development
February 19, 2020

Good afternoon Chairman Tarwater and members of the committee: My name is Patrick Vogelsberg. I am the manager of government affairs for Kansas Gas Service. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support for HB 2703, which would bar local units of government from prohibiting practices that are approved by national model codes, which are developed through a robust stakeholder process. Through our testimony, we hope to provide additional rationale and context for our support of HB 2703.

Kansas Gas Service is the state's largest regulated natural gas utility, serving more than 635,000 residential, commercial and industrial customers, across 341 communities. Through our 900 employees in Kansas, we provide safe, clean, reliable and affordable natural gas through more than 18,000 miles of distribution mains and service lines.

The direct-use of natural gas continues to be the most efficient use of this abundant energy resource. Our customers rely on natural gas to affordably heat their homes, warm their water, cook their meals, and operate their businesses. Kansans deserve to have confidence in their choices made about the energy they use and not be made vulnerable or face increased cost of energy, due to decisions made by local governments, on energy policy that will have impacts beyond the local borders.

The natural gas industry, including Kansas Gas Service, continues to focus on innovation and advancing technologies that create new pathways to reduced emissions. In addition to increasingly efficient appliances, opportunities are emerging for renewable natural gas and incorporating hydrogen as avenues to reduce emissions from fugitive sources such as wastewater treatment plants, landfills and farming operations. Natural gas distribution systems provide the solution to capture and utilize these sources of energy. Kansas should remain open to all solutions, while continuing it's "all the above" approach to energy.

Unfortunately, Kansas Gas Service has a growing concern about local governments across the country proposing to limit energy choice, including banning the use of natural gas in residential and commercial applications. This pathway is shortsighted and will hinder a community's ability to reduce emissions while removing a reliable, low-cost energy option from its citizens.

HB 2703 would prohibit local governments from using local code to ban the use of natural gas, through direct-use appliances. This legislation would ensure Kansans continue to have energy choices. Furthermore, HB 2703 continues the longstanding precedent that energy policy affecting public utilities, such as Kansas Gas Service, should be established at the state-level.

Lastly, Kansas Gas Service does recommend that the following language be added to the bill: *No political subdivision of this state may adopt an ordinance, resolution, regulation, code, or policy that prohibits, or has the effect of prohibiting, the connection or reconnection of a utility service based upon the type or source of energy to be delivered to an individual customer.*

This amendment makes clear that a local government is prohibited from banning any particular utility service.

Thank you for your time; I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.