

February 14, 2019

Kansas Senate Utilities Committee

Dear Senators,

Before I retired two years ago, I paid for the installation of an array of solar panels on my residence roof with the aim of decreasing my Westar Energy bill during my retirement years since I am now living on a fixed income. My system started operation in April of 2017. Since installation, I have not had any single month during which I have generated more electricity with my solar panels than I have used. But on a day-to-day basis, during minutes or hours when I do generate more electricity than I use, this extra electricity which I am generating is used by my neighbors, Tom Bell, Bob Vidricksen and Bill Cathcart-Rake, who pay Westar Energy full price for this electricity without Westar Energy having to build or maintain any new transmission lines or pay any generation costs. Why should I be paying Westar Energy more per KW for their electricity when I am reducing their costs?

Since the unfair retroactive imposition of the demand charges, my wife, Fran, and I have been even more conscientious about using less electricity during peak demand times and have been successful during these winter months. However, I can envision a particularly hot, humid, windy day that is cloudy enough to result in minimal solar power generation with my air conditioner, refrigerator and freezer all running at the maximum power which could produce one hour that would increase my rate for the entire month. The higher cost summer demand charges caused by circumstances beyond my control will cause a significant increase in my electric bill and will significantly lengthen the 20 year pay-back that I was expecting from my solar panel array when it was installed. I resent paying commercial rates when I am not a business generating any personal income from my use of electricity.

A Westar Energy billboard in Topeka along I-70 touts the fact that 32% of their electricity comes from wind energy as though they were proud of the fact that they were promoting alternative energy sources. They should also be very proud of Distributed Generation customers and reward our efforts instead of trying to punish us with extra expenses. Please seriously consider advancing the Energy Fairness Act out of your committee to be considered by the full Senate.

Sincerely,

Dirk Hutchinson
1265 Columbine Lane
Salina, KS 67401
dirkth@cox.net