

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE UTILITIES COMMITTEE ON SB124
February 25, 2019

Thank you, Chairman Masterson, vice chairman Petersen, and members of the committee. I am Robert Rosenberg from Manhattan, a co-director of the Flint Hills Renewable Energy and Efficiency Co-op. The FHREECs are a group of volunteers who help people install solar panels by holding “barn raising events”, which we call Sunraisers.

We are in favor of Senate Bill 124 because it will remove the punitive demand fees imposed on those small residential customers who put a solar panel on their roof. We don't like Demand fees because they are difficult to predict, to control, and even to explain. Westar claims that Demand fees won't discourage rooftop solar since they add only about \$30.00/month to an electric bill. For the last 3 ½ years, the threat of these demand fees has greatly impacted the number of new installations among FHREEC members since our typical member generates only about \$50.00/month of electricity. Also, there is a risk that demand fees might be well over \$30.00.

There is a glaring injustice in the KCC approved 3-part rate plan. The new 3-part rate plan provides a discount on the electricity that you buy from Westar. This discount is the basis for Westar's claim that demand fees will not severely discourage rooftop solar. To prove their point, Westar provides an example of a large residential customer who uses LOTS of electricity and who greatly benefits from those discounts. Westar demonstrates that this large user of electricity can save money with the Demand Plan, and solar panels can help with demand fees. This is true! The current rate plan subsidizes people who use a lot of electricity (people with a mansion, hot tub, etc.) but the same plan penalizes the more modest consumer. The subsidy goes to people who need it the least and punishes those of us who conserve. The home-owners who are part of our organization are generally not wealthy—they are people willing to invest their own money in solar panels to avoid buying electricity generated from burning fossil fuels.

The KCC has not done its job so now it is up to the Senate Utilities Committee to protect the Kansans who generate renewable energy. We all know that rooftop solar is right for everyone in Kansas and that it is here to stay. We ask the Senate Utilities Committee to move Kansas into the modern age by approving Senate Bill 124.

I'm available for any questions.

Robert Rosenberg
Manhattan, Kansas