



January 25, 2021

The Honorable Mike Thompson
Kansas State Senate
225-E Capitol Building
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Dear Chairman Thompson:

Good afternoon, Chairman Thompson and members of the committee. My name is Bart Armstrong. I am the President of the Colorado-Kansas Division of Atmos Energy Corporation. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support for SB24, which would protect Kansas consumers' right to choose the energy that is best for their homes and businesses. Across the country, special interest groups are influencing local governments to limit the types of energy available to customers. The resulting policies mandate electricity as the only option, which will increase energy costs, decrease energy reliability, and impact economic growth.

Atmos Energy is the nation's largest natural-gas only utility. In Kansas we are privileged to serve more than 135,000 residential, commercial and industrial customers. In the northeast, we serve the communities of Olathe, Kansas City, Overland Park and others. To the southwest, we serve communities including Johnson City, Ulysses, and Syracuse. We also serve the southeast communities of Independence and Coffeyville. In the central part of Kansas, we provide service to the communities of Anthony and Caldwell, as well as Ness City, Herington, and many others.

Kansas residential, commercial, and industrial consumers are very capable of making their own decisions regarding the types of utility service they use for the various needs they have. Until recently, U.S. homeowners could choose based upon price, usage costs, maintenance costs and personal preference the appliances they would use to heat their homes, water and cook their food. National directives and trends have limited those choices already based upon energy efficiency standards. Still unsatisfied, special interest groups put pressure on the utility industry to mandate how energy should be made, irrespective of affordability. Now these groups want to force customers to exclude natural gas service as an option in their energy choices. And they are influencing local governments across our country to help accomplish this goal.

The truth is that natural gas service is affordable, efficient, and also integral to any feasible plan to reduce carbon emissions in Kansas. Our customers who use natural gas heating in their homes pay hundreds of dollars less in energy costs than they would if they used electric service for this purpose. These savings help reduce the energy burden facing our low-income customers who already spend a higher percentage of their income on energy bills than any other income group. Natural gas service provides the

added benefit of energy security and reliability, as natural gas service is less susceptible to extreme weather, natural disasters, and other unpredictable events. In addition, natural gas retains more than 90% of its energy from extraction through transportation and distribution to direct use, making it our most efficient energy option by far.

Natural gas is delivered safely, reliably and in an environmentally responsible way. Atmos Energy has joined with other stakeholders to enhance the safety of our system through infrastructure replacement programs. Replacement not only enhances safety and reliability, but also recognizes the impact we have on the environment by reducing methane emissions.

Kansas is well suited for future success as homes and businesses have access to varied sources for their energy needs. From wind to solar, nuclear to natural gas and renewable gas sources, there is no limit to what we can accomplish. Atmos Energy is proud to be a part of the energy solution for Kansans and we will continue to do our part to preserve energy choice for generations to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Atmos Energy, as well as the customers and communities we serve.

Sincerely,

Bart Armstrong
President, CO-KS Division
Atmos Energy Corporation