

January 21, 2021

David Norlin  
Retired College Educator and Communications Specialist  
Past Chair: City of Salina Planning Commission

To Ms. Wodtke and Utilities Committee members:

I urge you to reject SB24.

My reasons are twofold:

First, my participation for over a decade with the Salina Resilience Group has constantly reinforced our critical need to take the 30,000 foot view—of the state, nation, and globe. A key critical issue is reducing carbon emissions. This winter, pleasant as some of the days have been, points vividly to global heating, record year after record year. This heat is, has been, and will be accompanied by longer drought periods punctuated by punishing, uncontrollable floods.

What's great in January may be crushing in July. This affects local food production and water supply.

In 'urban' Salina, the Planning Commission sees countless illustrations of high costs of maintaining aging infrastructure—hundreds of miles of utility pipe and sewer lines, for example—which on a 50-year plan, are replaced about 2-3 year's worth at a time. The pace may be exceeded in any year, but the enormity of that task alone is daunting.

The cost of replacing the old is great. All the more reason to replace the new more cheaply. New, all-electric buildings can be built at lesser cost, simultaneously providing opportunity to use renewable energy. (We live in wind-swept Kansas, for heaven's sake, and solar is rapidly becoming less expensive and more user-friendly.). Of course, renewables reduce carbon emissions--half a billion tons per year in the US.

So, to modernize cheaply and maintain infrastructure in part with savings, can simultaneously minimize carbon emissions. That is smart, not dumb, long-term planning.

Second point---and I'm working hard to not scream this at you in frustration (perhaps one reason this testimony is written only)--you are removing LOCAL CONTROL.

How do you really claim to defend citizen independence if you pass a bill that removes city/county flexibility by limiting our ability to support new, all-electric buildings via our building codes? That is top-down mismanagement at its worst.

Given that this legislature is largely conservative Republican (although the facts should convince legislators of any party), I can scarcely fathom that you are seriously considering this bill.

Thank you for ditching it!

Sincerely,

David Norlin, 608 E Republic, Salina, 67401—Phone: (785) 201-2780