



January 26, 2021

Neutral Testimony on Senate Bill 24
Senate Utilities

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Senate Utilities Committee:

I appear today on behalf of Northeast Johnson County cities including Merriam, Mission, and Westwood Hills. I appreciate the opportunity to provide neutral testimony on Senate Bill 24, which would prohibit municipalities from imposing restrictions on a customer's use of energy based upon the source of energy.

We are testifying neutral while supporting local control and acknowledging that our local elected officials best know their constituents' and communities' needs.

Many of our cities share a common interest in addressing the climate crisis and finding ways to better use renewable resources into the future. Our communities are committed to finding ways to explore alternative energy sources that best fit our individual communities. For example, the City of Mission in their legislative platform "supports policies which allow and encourage homeowners and businesses to utilize and invest in alternative energy rather than imposing fees or additional barriers which result in discouraging investment that can save residents and businesses money."

SB 24 poses challenges to these priorities by reducing the options available to cities without placing the policy of energy generation in the broader context of climate change and economic growth. For these reasons, we believe cities and the State of Kansas would be better served by adoption of a state energy plan that would help guide investments in areas of clean energy generation and would identify steps to increase support for affordable, reliable energy with opportunities to attract high-paying energy jobs to the state. Continued investment in energy efficiency programs translate into economic returns for the state. Kansas and public utilities have the opportunity to realize significant returns from continued investment in renewable energy. Energy efficiency saves money, drives investment across all sectors of the economy, creates jobs, and reduces the environmental impact of energy use. Rather than focusing on narrowing options, we encourage the Legislature to develop a state energy plan, invest in and establish incentives for public utilities to invest in energy conservation, renewable energy, and energy efficient technologies.

We value the vital service the natural gas industry provides to our communities and residents and do not believe our commitment to sustainability should hinder that relationship. However, we believe our local communities are best poised and obligated to reflect community interests about the future, especially those that impact our residents long-term. Flexibility in addressing the climate crisis and the ability to adopt sustainable policies and best practices as

they evolve is key for our cities. We look forward to working across industries and with diverse partners to ensure our Kansas communities are at the forefront of adopting responsible, sustainable, and affordable renewable practices.

Thank you for your consideration and I welcome any questions you may have on this matter.

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