

March 9, 2021

Senator Mike Thompson

I am writing in reference and support of SB 279. As a resident of Marshall County, I have recently witnessed first hand how a multi-billion dollar out of state company is forever changing our landscape in Kansas at the true cost of our citizens. Unfortunately the County Commissioners in Marshall County did not attempt to take a stand against the power of NextEra as they worked to get industrial wind turbines across the SouthEast corner of our county.

SB 279 outlines the clear need and sets parameters on the wind turbine setbacks from homes, property lines as well as public properties. Unfortunately, while the commissioners were led to believe they had the final site placement rights of the wind turbines, this was not what actually occurred, as the turbines were placed and then explained that they could be moved slightly but not in a meaningful way. There are soon to be homes who which will have multiple (in places, multiples of multiples) turbines within one half mile from their homes. Oddly enough, those with many turbines surrounding their home in close proximity are non-participating land owners, while the participating landowners have been spared from this indecency. This bill will clearly prevent this abuse of power and the appearance of intimidation of non-participating land owners.

I also want to highlight the importance of the items highlighted within the application for construction for industrial wind turbines. While these expectations seem basic, today the large wind energy companies basically set their own rules to impose on counties which are clearly not set up to handle, nor have the experience to challenge these large firms. In fact, NextEra, helped provide a lawyer to help guide the county thru the project. Unfortunately our county commissioners fell trap to the obvious failure to represent with a clear bias to NextEra. As the lawyer instructed closed door meetings to discuss matters with NextEra and to limit public comment on wind energy to a set specific time within their meetings, it was unfortunately very clear that any potential of regulation from the County Commissioners was a lost cause, but SB 279 clearly highlights the needed regulations and expectations the Wind Energy companies must meet before they can pursue these industrial wind farms.

I appreciate you and the committees clear deliberation on moving this bill forward to help in the protection of our citizens in Kansas. While clearly wind energy can help many local farmers thru diversification, it should not be at the cost of neighbors thru out the state. As the bill stands, it does not stop wind energy within our state, but it does stop the abuse of power that is held as these industrial wind farms are developed.

Thank you,

Jarrold Gillig

Blue Rapids, KS