

Proponent Testimony SB 279, March 22, 2021
Senate Utilities Committee

By Glenda Taylor, 1425 Shawnee Rd. McPherson KS

Senator Mike Thompson, Chair, and members of the Utilities Committee,

I strongly support SB 279.

For nearly two decades, Kansans have been the recipients of the wind industry's strong-arm tactics. The outcome has taken a toll on communities, electric rates, and residential land values. It's time to enact commonsense legislation to protect Kansas' citizens.

While the opponents of SB 279 will cite "Home Rule" as a defense against regulating the commercial wind industry in Kansas, Home Rule has not been sufficient to protect counties and communities. Wind companies have learned how to exploit the statute for their own purposes.

When a county board is unwilling to approve a wind farm, attorneys for the wind company often threaten to sue the county (Nemaha, Neosho, Bourbon), which results in reluctant approval of the project. Even when a county board has the gumption to vote down a wind project (Reno), the wind company turns around and sues them. Wind companies have also sued private citizens who oppose their projects, such as Marion County's case where Expedition Wind sued six property owners for \$35 million. This antagonistic behavior is an assault on Kansans and an attempt to frighten them into submission.

The minimum setbacks in SB 279 offer a modicum of protection against the negative impact of towering turbines. Yes, the bill will impede commercial wind projects in *populated* rural areas, but a vast region of Western Kansas still meets construction requirements.

In February, we saw what happened when wind energy failed during a polar vortex. Now, Kansans are facing outrageous energy bills because our grid could not withstand Old Man Winter's onslaught. Statistically speaking, there is no reason to cater to the commercial wind industry—electricity rates have skyrocketed, residential values (near turbines) have plummeted, and wind energy failed to protect us when we needed it most.

Protecting the integrity of our state is now in your hands. I thank you for your time and consideration.

Please vote Yes on SB 279.