



KANSAS
ASSOCIATION OF
COUNTIES

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Senate Utilities Committee
March 22, 2021
SB 279

Kansas Association of Counties
Opponent Testimony

Chairman Thompson and members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing the Kansas Association of Counties to offer testimony on SB 279, which deals with wind energy generation permitting and siting of wind turbines.

The Kansas Association of Counties opposes the pre-emption of local control, particularly on issues of land use. KAC believes that government closest to the people will best understand and serve the community's needs. It has been said time and again that one size does not fit all, yet SB 279 would attempt to do just that, applying the requirements of the bill across the entire state.

KAC is also concerned about a portion of the bill that appears to be retroactive to July 1, 2011. For leases after that date, it appears that the new requirements would apply. This could jeopardize existing leases entered into in good faith due to the retroactive nature of the provision.

KAC is concerned about the economic impact of these restrictions. Thirty counties in Kansas have wind farms in operation currently. These wind farms have an annual economic impact of over \$45M. Between the donation agreements and property tax payments, nearly \$600M is generated.¹ The revenue that county and local governments receive helps shift the property tax burden away from residential and agricultural taxpayers in these areas, offering property tax relief through increased growth and development.

If these restrictions prevent new development, the associated direct and indirect jobs would be lost, in addition to the new tax revenue and payments to landowners. These are good paying jobs in rural areas that would be eliminated by these statewide restrictions. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that over 12,000 jobs have been created as an indirect result of wind energy in Kansas.²

For these reasons, KAC would respectfully request that SB 279 not be recommended for passage. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information to the committee. KAC stands ready to answer questions at the appropriate time.

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¹ Annual Economic Impacts of Kansas Wind Energy – 2020 Report

² Annual Economic Impacts of Kansas Wind Energy – 2020 Report