

Jessica Gigstad

Rural Everest, KS

Senate Utilities Committee

Proponent Testimony for SB353

Chairman Thompson and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB353. This bill is an important because it offers protection to residents who do not want wind energy in close proximity to their homes or communities. Those landowners who wish to have a wind turbine have nothing standing in their way, the door is wide open to them. Those who don't are on their own. This is a complicated issue. I respect the rights of those who wish to have a turbine on their property, however those not in favor have rights as well. If this bill passes, it would save relationships between neighbors. It would protect county commissioners from energy companies with armies of lawyers and limitless resources. It would force transparency on the part of the energy companies. Our county commissioners often aren't equipped to negotiate with energy companies who have been known to manipulate or withhold information for their own benefit. This bill would provide a degree of protection to our small communities.

I come from a line of dairy farmers who live in northeast Nebraska, the sandhills are my home. Rolling hills, small creeks, undisturbed prairies, huge cottonwoods. This area is subtly beautiful, and unless you were lucky enough to grow up there, you likely wouldn't appreciate it. Starting in 2014 the wind companies contacted many of our neighbors and friends. The Prairie Breeze I and II and III facilities moved into Antelope County. When I visit home now, it looks so vastly different from when I grew up. There are 118 turbines in Prairie Breeze I, 41 in Prairie Breeze II, 20 in Prairie Breeze III. In neighboring Holt County at Grande Prairie Wind LLC, in 2016 there were *200 hundred turbines* built. That's almost 400 turbines. The entire area is completely overrun, and yet the wind energy companies are not done yet, they are still soliciting. As recently as this past summer, my parents were contacted about putting turbines on their property. I saw the glossy folder sitting on the desk with the picture of the white turbine against green fields, stating all the benefits of having a turbine and none of the drawbacks. Nothing about shadow flicker, how it could affect my dad's cattle, or the wildlife. My mother declined the proposal, stating that we have bald eagles that make their home on our ranch and we'd like to keep them. There are literally *hundreds* of turbines in our area in Nebraska, enough is enough.

I'm sincerely requesting that some limits be placed on these energy companies. SB353 would simply place some limitations and force these companies to become more transparent in their negotiations with counties and landowners. More transparency is something we can all agree on, correct? Please help us and represent your voters. Landowners and county commissioners standing up to government subsidized energy companies is like sending David out to meet Goliath, please help us to preserve our beautiful rural areas. Thank you for hearing my testimony.

Jessica Gigstad