

Kansas Senate Utilities Committee

Testimony in favor of SB478

By Bryan Coover

Chairman Mike Thompson and committee members

I am a resident of Neosho County Kansas. I live in the footprint of the Neosho Ridge Wind turbine complex. There are wind turbines every direction from my house. No daytime activity outside does not include 600-foot-tall structures. Usually rotating and noisy, wind turbines mostly define the surroundings of what was once a quiet, scenic, rural setting. There is nothing you can do to change this fact.

You can, however, change the nighttime lights: two, very bright, red blinking lights on each of 139 turbines. To me, and many others, they are the worst annoyance the wind facility gives us, and it is substantial.

The developer for Neosho Ridge Wind, Apex, refused to include radar activation for the FAA required warning lights that now blink continuously at night. The owner of NRW, Liberty/Empire, states publicly that the cost would be unfair to their ratepayers. There is a rate case currently before the Missouri Public Service Commission to include the entire 500-million-dollar cost of NRW into the retail power rate for its' customers. The benefit of the federal production tax credit, originally projected to be \$30 million per year goes entirely to Liberty's tax equity partner and Liberty's stockholders. Liberty had testified before the MPSC that the first 20-year savings to ratepayers would exceed \$200 million dollars. None of these ratepayers are near the wind facility we live in. Liberty-Empire Electric serves a few customers in Cherokee County, Kansas and the rest are in Missouri.

There is good research that shows that the visual intrusion of wind turbines increases the annoyance factor for those people than can both see and hear them. A 2011 study published in the Environmental Health Journal discusses the relationship. That article was written by Dr. Christopher A. Ollson. You may remember him from his opponent testimony to SB 353 a few weeks ago. That study is available online and is quite informative work concerning the nuisance from sound and visual clutter that is characteristic of wind turbines.

I suspect you will hear opponent testimony from Allan Anderson, an attorney that works for the wind industry. He will once again tell you that those rural residents that are sleep deprived or otherwise annoyed can always file legal action to solve any nuisance dispute. Nothing is further from the truth. I, along with 36 other Neosho County residents, filed suit to stop NRW from being constructed due to expected nuisance. Mr. Anderson's firm represented Apex. We were deposed into submission, and we agreed to a settlement after delays beyond commencement of construction made the question moot. Although I am not allowed to discuss settlement terms, I am happy to answer questions about the depositions and delaying tactics.

As I am driving home in the evening, I can see a bank of large, bright, flashing red lights stretching across the horizon. My heart is in my stomach because I know that that is where I now live, and I don't want to go there. I have lived in this house for over 30 years, and until this facility was built, driving home was comforting. I suspect most of the committee don't have an appreciation of the night sky equal to that of most rural residents. On those nights when the moon is late to rise or sets early, the Milky Way Galaxy can be a truly breath-taking spectacle. While any other the major meteor showers are generally worth setting your alarm clock, you may not know that random meteors grace the sky 3 or 4 times per hour all night long. Sunrises and sunsets used to be beautiful. The continuous flashing FAA lighting takes that away, too.

Please support SB 478. Requiring radar-activated is a cost-effective way to mitigate the most annoying aspect of living around wind energy facilities, but developers and owners will not do it unless they are required to. Don't let them try to tell you they will do it if it is included in contracts with the county, we've been there, and it just doesn't happen. Or let them say that it will cost them too much because it doesn't. It would be paid for by my tax money and electricity bill and I would prefer that to dealing with these lights the rest of my life.

Thank you the opportunity to testify.

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