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SB 46 - light mitigation

Written-ONLY testimony

From:

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Kansas Senate Utilities Committee

WRITTEN TESTIMONY in SUPPORT of SB 46

Chairman Robert Olson and Members of the Committee:

A couple years ago, the Neosho County Commission established the Neosho Ridge Wind Farm Advisory Committee and appointed me chairman.

I own and live on a farm in the footprint which I had named "Starlight Meadow Farm." As the name suggests, for many of us, one of the joys of Kansas rural living is the splendor of the night sky.

The Neosho Ridge Wind Farm consists of 139 turbines. The top of the blade gives them a height of around 600'. Each turbine has 2 flashing strobe lights which consume the footprint countryside.

Not all residents of the footprint countryside were offered wind farm lease agreements. There are numerous homes on small tracts in the footprint. They represent dreams of country living. They are victims of these strobe lights and the noise the turbines generate. It has, to a degree, transformed rural living into industrial park living.

Our committee members agreed that the wind farm was here to stay. We could do nothing about the appearance of the countryside and could have limited success with the noise issue. We unanimously agreed that the most important change that could be made to make a moderately good

neighbor of the wind farm was to change the lighting to radar-activated lights. At least then we could have rural living during the night.

The vast majority of customers of the wind farm are in Missouri. The Wind Farm owners claimed their 3 wind farms would save ratepayers \$169,000,000 over a 20-year time period. They have admitted the turbine lights can be converted to radar-activated lights at a cost of under \$2,500,000 with a minimal annual maintenance expense. We believe the burden of conversion is slight and should be done as soon as possible.

Neosho Ridge was rendered inoperable for a period of 90-120 days in the past year. I cannot describe the depth of psychological relief we experienced during that time. Nights were special again.

Senate Bill 46 is a noble effort to make wind energy a better neighbor. It is an appropriate use of governmental police power, in my opinion, to preserve the attractions of rural living. Wind energy should be compelled to be a good neighbor. We were living here before they arrived and have made investments in our homes. The availability of country living is another selling point for Kansas. For many Kansans, that is their dream.

Please advance and ultimately enact Senate Bill 46. Thank you for your attention to this matter. For the record I support Green Energy and understand its value to Kansas. As a committee, we also acknowledge the right to lease for this purpose. We just want the operation to be as good a neighbor as possible.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Rev. Dr. Stan Basler, Chairman, Neosho Ridge Wind Farm Advisory Committee