

HEARTLAND
TRI-STATE BANK



MEMBER FDIC

House Bill 2273

Written Testimony

February 15, 2019

INTRODUCTION:

Thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony regarding House Bill 2273 currently before this committee. I am Shan Hanes, President and CEO of Heartland Tri-State Bank in Elkhart, Kansas. In regards to the bill currently up for discussion, I am also a member of the Morton County Economic Development Committee and the Chair of the Business Retention and Expansion sub-committee within Economic Development.

DISCUSSION:

This bill currently before this committee is of great interest to residents of Kansas. The opportunity to provide renewable energy for future generations at an affordable rate should always be a top priority to any legislative agenda. Even worse would be laws created with the intentional affect to decrease the creation of renewable energy in Kansas, discourage businesses from locating in Kansas and completing construction projects in Kansas, and lower employment opportunities for Kansans. All of the above would be the direct and immediate results of HB2273 being passed by this Congress and enacted in the State.

Without belaboring the point, I would like to briefly touch on three points:

1. Land Values
2. Economic Growth Opportunities
3. Employment Opportunities

First, land values in rural Kansas are of great importance to residents, local governments, and state economy. I was told some time ago by a wind expert that SW Kansas is the “Saudi Arabia of wind.” Having lived in this area my entire life and enjoyed/suffered the range of wind speeds over the years, I would agree that we have ample wind for considerable wind generation. In the limited areas where wind farms have been established, the value of the affected real estate has increased significantly. In addition, the local cities, schools, and counties benefited from the increased tax revenue. That income to local residents and tax revenue to the municipalities was all very positive. Obviously, members of this committee are well aware of benefits to the State when local residents are prosperous.

Second, economic growth opportunities are invaluable to rural Kansas. Our local town just saw two new businesses open. While that might not be a big deal in a large urban area, to a small, rural town—that is a huge success. Any opportunity to grow the local economy with any new industrial enterprise is gladly welcomed. In addition, I’ve noticed the number of smaller, supply type businesses who also open around wind farms to support the needs of the large farm bring economic value to the area.

Lastly, employment opportunities. A safe number seems to be one full-time technician to ten wind towers. Just consider a 100-tower wind farm (small by most standards today) would employ ten additional full-time technicians. In addition to those ten jobs, there would be additional employee workforce from the spouses of those individuals. The kids from those individuals would attend the local schools and take part of the many activities.

While there are additional points to be made, I feel the main point has been made and supported. A decision to limit the growth of Kansas in any way would be contrary to the efforts of this and any other Legislature in Kansas.

CONCLUSION:

Thank you for allowing me to express my interest HB 2273. I respectfully ask you to vote against the passage of this bill out of committee. I understand general rules need to be in place to allow resident's personal space property rights be protected. However, that decision should be made between the local landowners and the wind companies. Those laws should not be legislated at a state level not allowing individuals to make business decisions. If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact me at your convenience. I can be reached at:

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