

Testimony for Public Hearing HB 2241
March 19, 2013, 9:00 am, Conference Room 582 North

To: House Committee on Energy and Environment
Rep. Dennis Hedke, Chair
Rep. Steve Alford, Vice Chair

From: Kirk Schweitzer, Director
Graham County Economic Development, Inc.
Hill City, Kansas 785-421-2211

RE: HB2241 – RELATING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY PORTFOLIO STANDARDS

IN OPPOSITION

Chairs & Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing me to provide written opposition to HB 2241. I serve as the Director for Graham County Economic Development Inc. (GCED), a nonprofit organization committed to promoting the business interest of Graham County, Kansas. HB 2241 is a threat to our efforts to develop an agricultural project based on utilizing an abundant natural resource, which is farming the wind.

In March 2009, Graham County Economic Development commissioned a unique (first of its kind in the nation) high resolution wind map of Graham County. An economic impact study to determine what the impact of wind energy projects would produce for the county was also completed all in response to the question on how the County can economically and socially survive by utilizing our available resources. After four years of work Nordex USA, developer of our Ringneck Prairie Wind Farm, and GCED are nearing terms on power purchase agreements with a start of construction set for early fall of this year. Nordex is responding to RFP's with terms less than \$25.00/ MWh. The potential impact of HB 2241 has stalled those negotiations.

Ringneck Prairie is a small project in terms of wind farms, 70 MW that would include 28 towers over an area of 14,000 acres. Though it is considered as a small utility scale wind farm, it would have a great impact in our County. The projected impact the Ringneck Prairie project includes approximately \$25 million of direct spending and the creation of 67 jobs during the 12 months of construction with approximately \$1.2 million of spending annually to land owners and PILOT payments. Also it creates seven jobs directly related to the operations and maintenance of the facilities, these position are usually filled by relocating new families to the County. This is only the gain from one project of the several planned for our County. Without these wind energy projects Graham County will continue to struggle with the issues of declining population. Of the many Department of Commerce programs, that actually cost the State, few have helped slow our decline.

I recognize the intent of HB 2241 is well intended but, it will limit the potential of many rural Counties. I believe that this bill will cause damage to an industry that has proven to be a path for success for Kansas.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in opposition to HB 2241.