

Senator Mike Thompson
Chair Utilities Committee

I give you permission to use my letter as testimony in support of SB279.

Already the blades have begun to turn, and the night is filled with red blinking lights. What began four years previously is coming to fruition.

2016 is when our story began. It started when a land developer stopped by to sign our land up for wind turbines. It would be a supplement for retiring? Maybe, but what would be involved? Nothing is FREE! The lease to be signed would be for a total of 50 years. Our grandson would be 61 years old when it was up. I could not sign that lease. My husband asked me to research wind turbines and the leases before saying No. This was the beginning of four years of research and we were not liking what I found. This was also the beginning of attending many commissioners meetings because a company, Apex, wanted to put 139 wind generators standing 597 feet tall in District 1 of Neosho County, KS. We were prime targets with existing transmission lines, and No zoning. There are approximately 300 non participating landowners who own homes in District 1, and of the people that signed leases with Apex, very few actually live in the "footprint" of this District. Most of the lease holders live elsewhere. Beachner Brothers Corporate Farms leases the majority of the land. (We desperately need a bill stating that one must live in the footprint to lease ones land.)

As time went on Jennifer Orr, a commissioner of Neosho County, began to have questions that weren't getting answered, and began to change her views. Soon, Jennifer was replaced by her X- husband, David Orr who was appointed by Governor Laura Kelly. Mr. Orr had failed two times previously to be elected by the people and has lost the current election to remain in office. David Orr was matter of fact from the beginning that he wanted the wind farm for Neosho County, as it in his mind, would negate debt incurred to Neosho County from a previous commissioner concerning the cement plant at Chanute, KS.

A second commissioner, David Bideau, began to have questions and not getting answers began to question his views. Mr. Bideau was then replaced by Gail Klaassen, who was nominated for the position by our county attorney Linus Thuston and appointed by the Republic Committee whom Mr. Thuston, Doug Klaassen (Gail's husband) and Gail herself were voting members. Two weeks to the day of Mrs Klaassen's appointment, she and David Orr, from Districts 2 &3, signed an RUA with Apex, so they could begin building Neosho Ridge Wind in Neosho County, KS, District1.

A small group of non-leased landowners began a lawsuit to try and stop the building of turbines in our community. We felt they totally ruined the view and were too close to homes. The depositions were drug out and money to continue was becoming a problem. The "straw that broke the camels back" was when a federal judge moved the lawsuit from being heard March of 2020, to March of 2021. Turbines would be built by then!

Now we have three turbines 3000-4000 feet from our home and forty three in a three and one half mile radius. One of my husband's landlord that he rents ground from signed a lease with Apex. He ended up with a high voltage line running the length of the field. The landlord told my husband that the crane path would follow the buried line and he wanted the field planted to a crop. My husband was so upset when he found people driving all over the field, now planted in soybeans, marking other crane paths.

The payment for loss goes to the landlord and as of March 2021 we have not been reimbursed for our losses.

Today we are waiting to see the effects the turbines will have on our health. In the past when visiting a wind farm my husband would suffer disorientation and feel ill. We have farmed here in Neosho County 47 years. I can now testify that outside the turbines sound like a jet plane hovering over our home, going nowhere and the whoosh is horrible as are the flashing red lights at night.

We are still left with many questions:

Will we be able to sleep at night when they all get turned on?

Will infrasound be a problem to our health?

Will ice be thrown and blades break?

Will our internet and phones work in an emergency?

What happens to us if one should catch fire? I'm thinking tall grass, August, and 50 mile an hour winds.

Will a fire be controlled?

Please help us and move the turbines away from homes!

Sincerely,

Rex and Denise Houghton