

SENATE UTILITIES COMMITTEE
SENATE BILL 455
FEBRUARY 23, 2004

Distinguished Senator Stan Clark-

It is my understanding that you are about to deal with a very important bill. That bill is designated SB#455 and includes issues that will deal directly with the proposed windfarm near our home. While we may or may not benefit from this project, I feel it is very important to develop this resource. It is non-polluting, is renewable and we feel desirable to other energy sources. We happen to have a prime chance to capitalize as the conditions appear favorable for a required sustained wind flow plus the site is close enough to users to make it a good business investment.

Those opposed have sited that other governments have decreased the money for such ventures. That is so in Germany because the cost is coming down. Remember how much hand held calculators cost when they first came out? Now they are give away as advertisements or cost only a few dollars. Success of this project is essential to future developments and eventual lower cost per unit of energy.

The proposed site lies entirely outside the area that is regarded as "prairie Flint Hills" so that vegetation will not be disturbed. We ventured to Montazuma and failed to see the objection due to noise or vision. I regard them as engineering marvels. We saw them in Scandinavia, Michigan, and almost missed seeing them as we didn't expect to see them. The California towers are being taken down to be replaced by the newer models that are increasingly more efficient. People in the Flint Hills just south of Council Grove and north of Council Grove have farmed around the great power lines that traverse the terrain for almost 50 years. Those living and farming with these power lines now may have a chance to get something out of the deal other than an inconvenience. S#455 is poised to make the difference.

The portion of the bill that requires a permit for each tower should not be necessary. This language is so restrictive that it prohibits any project from happening in the Flint Hills. I would liken this restriction to the idea of opening a womans' clothing store in an overweight popouation and being told that only size 5 can be sold.

I spoke to former Senator Jerry Karr about the make up of the governors task force. The agricultural land holders were listed as "ranchers". We are not a ranch situation as are many others in Morris County. The farming area north of 56 highway and west of Council Grove are more farm land than ranch. While respecting those who do have good stands of Bluestem and do have managed ranches, I feel that our voice is not being heard because of the Task Force structure. The bill, as I understand the language, is throwing up road blocks to areas that want the project to go forward. My parents are proud to be classified as having a "Century Farm" by the Kansas Farm Bureau. Some of our farm has been in the my husband's family farming practices for over 100 years, so we know about "staying on the farm. Don't let the vocal ranchers with strong resources speak over farmers who have lived on the land for generations and would need the income to survive. We view the project income as a "year-round crop".

Our forefathers (and mothers) had the pioneering spirit to try new and different solutions to old problems. If this bill is passed on, I feel that a very important economic oppourtunity for Kansas will be lost or prolonged unnecessarily.

I would like very much to discuss this with you on Monday the 23rd, but find that our "off farm" jobs will not let either of us attend. We will be watching the outcome of your senate activities and hope that the goal of economic development for our state and rural residents and positive progress for the future of Kansas is important to you. Colleen Anderson, Council Grove, Kansas