



**Testimony of Ashok Gupta, NRDC
In Support of HB 2156 – Written Only
Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications
February 9, 2023**

Good Morning Chairman Delperdang, Vice Chair Turner, Ranking Member Ohaebosim and Members of the Energy, Utilities, and Telecommunications Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present my thoughts on HB 2156, legislation authorizing the Kansas Corporation Commission to establish rates that help low-income residential customers.

My name is Ashok Gupta and I am a Senior Energy Economist at NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council). I have been with NRDC since 1991 and my work has primarily focused on electric utility regulatory issues. The last ten years I have resided in Merriam, Kansas. My work is focused on finding solutions to complex challenges facing the utility industry.

What you have in HB 2156 is a solution – a tool - to assist with the problems associated with affordability for residential customers and authorize the Kansas Corporation Commission, in conjunction with stakeholders such as CURB and the utilities, to address it in an integrated manner. Issues of non-payment, energy burden, and proper rate design for residential customers should all be considered together in a rate case and this legislation allows for that.

Energy is an essential need for health and safety – especially when consumers are dealing with very cold and hot temperatures. Designing rates that help customers with their bills, especially during periods of high usage is essential. Federal programs, such as the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) may also be considered when rates are designed. Targeted utility efficiency programs can also be part of the equation to help customers manage their usage. This bill allows that to happen.

What HB 2156 does is to create an opportunity to address affordability and do so within the class of residential customers and do so without impacting commercial and industrial customers.

Please reach out to me with any questions and I urge your timely consideration of HB 2156 so residential consumers can benefit from smarter rate design. Thank you for your time.