



Testimony of Brad Loveless
Director Biology and Conservation Programs, Westar Energy
Before the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
On HB 2362
February 25, 2013

Thank you Chairwoman Schwartz and members of the committee for the opportunity to provide neutral testimony on HB 2362.

Over the last several years, Westar Energy has been an active builder of infrastructure throughout the state. Our Prairie Wind transmission line stretches 108 miles from near Kiowa to Medicine Lodge to Wichita and the recently completed Rose Hill to Sooner line runs from Rose Hill south to the Oklahoma line. We've been involved in siting wind projects, either that we would own or which we purchase power from near Medicine Lodge, Spearville, Leoti, Ellsworth, and Concordia. I worked with the wind developers and on the transmission lines to minimize the disturbance to the Kansas ecosystem and Westar followed the relevant statutes and regulations, including the Kansas nongame and endangered species conservation act in K.S.A. 32-957 through 32-963. For our Prairie Wind line, we checked to see what percent of the projected overall cost could be attributed to labor and materials spent to comply with these Kansas statutes, and they added up to approximately 0.03 percent. By comparison, costs to comply with the federal endangered species act are triple this.

My experience has been that the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism has consistently applied the statute to our projects. When disagreements arose, my staff and I worked towards agreeable resolutions or mitigation plans, often with give and take on both sides. At the federal level, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service administers the national endangered species act. The changes proposed in HB 2362 may cause the Service to become more involved in conservation efforts in the state. Westar believes the state would be the best one to oversee this issue in our state.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.