



SB 339 Support

Written Testimony submitted to the
House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee

Curtis Sneden, President
Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce

March 10, 2020

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce supports Senate Bill 339, which standardizes the existing Economic Development Rider tariff (EDR) and creates a new economic development tool to attract larger power users to Kansas.

The Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce is part of a larger group called the Greater Topeka Partnership which supports the enhancement of economic development and quality of life in Topeka & Shawnee County. Along with its partner agencies, including GO Topeka, the Topeka Chamber works aggressively on behalf of its roughly 1,000 member businesses to create an environment which is attractive to business and conducive to future growth and prosperity for all Shawnee Countians.

Our organization has first-hand experience with the impeding effect the current EDR can have on our efforts to attract large businesses. Just last year, Topeka was in competition for a new company which would have brought 150 jobs to the Capital City with an average annual wage of \$45,000, \$68 million in capital investment, and a 10-year economic impact of \$883 million. Our team was encouraged to learn, that owing to our location, our talented workforce, our quality of life and available land and other possible incentives, Topeka was the front-runner for this enormous new project.

In December, though, we were surprised to learn Topeka had been removed from contention. The site selector working the deal was kind enough to provide us with some insight into where we fell short. This company is a massive electric user and their research indicated local rates were higher than the out of state community with whom Topeka was competing. Evergy worked valiantly to help with the rate issue but was not able to offer any additional discounts to this user to help close the gap. The deal was lost.

As Topeka and Shawnee County continue to try to attract businesses and families, we need all the tools available to ensure we have the flexibility to compete. In fact, almost



SB 339 Support

every community in Kansas is struggling to compete. Senate Bill 339 would give companies like Evergy the flexibility they need to work with communities and find creative ways to ensure Kansas stays in the running to attract the businesses and jobs of the future.

For these reasons, we urge you to support Senate Bill 339.

Contact:
Curtis S. Sneden, President
Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce
(785) 380-1751 ▪ curtis.snedens@topekpartnership.com