

To: Senate Utilities Committee  
RE: SB-124 / HB-2190  
February 10, 2019

I support the Energy Fairness Act and I'd like to explain the impact the additional Westar charges have had on my life.

I have an all-electric house in a rural area of Shawnee County. I retired in 2019 and am living on a fixed income. As part of my retirement plan and to conserve natural resources, I put in solar panels in 2016 to assure I could afford my electric bill during retirement. The additional demand fees implemented in late 2018 have increased my electric bill even with all the effort I have put in to try to minimize my usage to 5 kW or less during demand measurement periods. Even this very limited level of use, adds \$15.00 to my bill during winter and will add \$45.00 to my bill in the summer.

I normally keep my heat set to 70-72 degrees but I let it get down to 66 during the demand period to try to keep the heat from coming on. I always wear insulated flannel shirts and use blankets to try to stay warm from 2-7 pm. I only keep one light on in the house and use a flashlight if I need to go into another room. I can't use the microwave or electric stove from 2-7 pm so I can't cook dinner until after 7 pm. I used to eat about 6 pm but I now have to eat about 8 pm which is not what I prefer, but I have no choice. Of course, I can't do laundry, vacuum, watch DVDs, run my desktop computer, and I open the refrigerator or freezer as little as possible to keep from using electricity.

Since I have electric heat, my furnace has an extra e-heat function that kicks in when the house needs warmed up quickly or the regular heat can't hold the temperature but it uses a lot of electricity when it runs. The e-heat came on and spiked our usage rate to 15.3 kW for just a few minutes before I reset it to keep it from running. Luckily this was on a Saturday, so it did not impact my electric bill this time. To assure this did not happen again when it would impact my bill, I had the e-heat rewired to separate breakers from the regular furnace so I could turn them off to assure they do not come on. I just live with the resulting slower heat response in my house.

During 2-7 pm, I also turn off the electric breakers for the hot water heater to assure it does not come on during the demand hours. I can't shower or wash dishes during this time period. During this time period, I consider if what I plan to do would use any electricity so I can assure I use no more electricity than I absolutely must.

I check the Westar page daily to check what my demand use was the day before. There are days when my usage goes higher and I have no idea why. All I can figure out is that my heat must have come on when the refrigerator or freezer were running to make a higher total demand amount. I don't know how to control this any more than I already have so it is very frustrating.

I hate living like this and feel it is very unfair to be forced to simply because I was trying to implement some conservation measures to assure I could afford the electricity I use now and in the future. I feel like I have been singled out for punitive fees because my conservation measures included installing solar panels instead of just insulation, new windows or other conservation measures. From what I read in the

newspaper, Westar has excess capacity available, so I question why I am being charged extra demand capacity fees. It feels like the purpose is a punishment to me and a deterrent to others to not install solar panels as an individual. Yet, Westar advertises encouraging customers to use solar as long as it is purchased through them and not as an individual. Why is this allowed and sanctioned for a utility that has a monopoly?

Future changes I am considering are: putting in a different heating system that uses propane instead of electricity, going off-grid and using a battery backup and anything else I can think of. I need to consider the long-term as well as immediate costs.

Please support the Energy Fairness Act to end this discrimination for people with solar panels and let me go back to living a life that I choose instead of one dictated by Westar.

Thank you,  
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