



*Joint Proponent Testimony Provided to the
House Energy & Utilities Committee
February 23, 2021*

Atmos
Black Hills Energy
Eversource
ITC Great Plains
Kansas City Board of Public Utilities
Kansas Electric Cooperatives
Kansas Electric Power Cooperative
Kansas Gas Service
Kansas Municipal Utilities
Liberty Utilities
Midwest Energy
Sunflower Electric Power Corporation

Kimberly Gencur Svaty, KMU Legislative Liaison

In Support of House Bill 2381

Good morning Mr. Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Ranking Member and members of the committee,

On behalf of the organizations listed above which provide electric and natural gas service to Kansans, we appreciate the opportunity to appear before you in support of HB 2381.

HB 2381 would create the Kansas state energy plan task force and be given the mission of developing a comprehensive, forward-looking study of energy policy issues in Kansas to promote quality of life, advance economic growth and support service and reliability.

While not getting into a full discussion of what transpired during the recent winter storm and associated prolonged Arctic blast which stretched deep into Texas, the role of the power grid and the natural gas infrastructure system is top of mind for many customers, businesses and policymakers. Kansas joined the Southwest Power Pool in 2004 and since then has been investing in the safety and reliability of the transmission system. It was through these well-studied, affirmed cost-saving projects, that the SPP grid performed so well during the historic 100-year event with only two modest load reduction measures. While there is always a fine and delicate balance in energy infrastructure investment, particularly after this recent event, most

would agree that investments in maintaining the reliability and safety of our natural gas pipes, transport pipes, well-heads, transmission lines, electric distribution systems and generation assets is of tantamount importance to provide safe, reliable and affordable service on a daily basis while also able to weather the most rugged weather events. The Energy Plan Taskforce can help ensure that the investment framework protecting the integrity of the entire energy system is maintained while keeping pricing affordable for customers.

HB 2381 suggests a forward-looking approach rather than another expensive historical retrospect. The task force includes a diverse set of voices, with legislators that can hold all stakeholders accountable to ensure that the solutions offered are truly in the best interests of all Kansas ratepayers.

HB 2381 is an initial step to creating a comprehensive energy plan for Kansas, something our state has not had in almost a decade. On June 1, 2004, the Kansas Energy Council was formed and charged with formulating and coordinating a comprehensive state energy plan and making recommendations regarding long-term energy policy to the Governor, Legislature, Kansas Corporation Commission and other appropriate entities. KMU participated on the Council and Colin Hansen had the honor of serving as the Chairman of the Kansas Energy Council.

Mission of the Kansas Energy Council

“The primary mission of the KEC should be to study trends in production, demand, distribution, technology, and economics that impact Kansas and then try to envision the future. Then, with the future in mind, make recommendations for policy (tax, regulatory, incentives) that is needed to facilitate future developments.”

At the time, state policymakers were concerned that Kansas had lost its status as an exporter of energy. They were concerned about the rate disparity between the eastern and western portions of the state. And they were concerned about the lack of new transmission build over several decades. The Kansas Energy Council held numerous meetings and created a variety of reports and tools that benefitted the state. Just one example of work product is the Council’s “Wind Energy Siting Handbook: Guideline Options for Kansas Cities and Counties.” The KEC spent an expansive amount of time deliberating transmission needs and baseload and renewable generation resources.

The Energy Council was a diverse group of stakeholders. Some may argue too diverse, so its accomplishments were limited. HB 2381 builds on the Energy Council’s experience and keeps a broad, diverse membership while limiting the size of the taskforce. In the 11 years since the Kansas Energy Council disbanded, there has not been another entity picking up the mission of the KEC which was a deliberative forum with legislative input to help ensure that Kansas’ energy policy had an encompassing look. HB 2381 is a positive step.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide remarks in support of HB 2381. We are happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.