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SISTERS OF CHARITY OF LEAVENWORTH

OFFICE OF JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Date: February 7, 2023
To: House Committee on Energy,
Utilities, and Telecommunications
From: John Shively, Lead Coordinator
RE: Support for House Bill 2227



Dear Chairman Delperdang and members of the Committee,

The Sisters of Charity follow the tradition of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, who began the daughters of charity with a particular emphasis on serving those living in poverty. In this same spirit, our office continues that work through education, advocacy, and action on justice issues that affect marginalized people. HB 2227 gives another tool to allow parishes, religious organizations, and non-profits to access renewable energy for their facilities while mitigating some of the upfront costs.

Under current law, only utilities can enter into a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with an organization looking to install renewables. Without PPAs, faith communities and religious organizations that wish to install renewable energy must fundraise the entire cost upfront, which is often not possible. The other option is to take out a loan, which is often cost prohibitive. Paying the cost upfront is highly unlikely unless an organization is well-resourced, and obtaining a loan is costly and often difficult to obtain for a renewable project.

Last year, in line with our commitment to stewardship for the Earth as God's creation, we wrote a partial grant to install renewable energy with a local non-profit partner. As we continued to research the most viable path to full financing, we continued to discover developers that helped finance projects by establishing PPAs, but we were unable to work with any of those partners under Kansas law. Kansas is one of only seven states that doesn't allow third parties to provide PPAs, putting us at a competitive disadvantage we think about a path to renewable expansion, growing local economies through job creation, and reducing energy costs. Eventually, we had to pivot those funds into providing energy efficiency for low-income households.

We support this bill, not for our benefit, but so that many other Kansans can benefit from accessing renewable energy, particularly in poor and marginalized communities. We want to continue to provide charitable opportunities for renewable installation and expansion to help serve marginalized populations, so we ask that you please consider voting yes on House Bill 2227.