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Written-only Testimony by Rabbi Moti Rieber in Support of HB 2588, Net Metering

House Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications, Rep. Leo Delperdang, chair
January 29, 2024

Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee:

Kansas Interfaith Action is a statewide, multi-faith issue-advocacy organization that “puts faith into action” by educating, engaging and advocating on behalf of people of faith and the public regarding critical justice issues. We are the advocacy partner of several of the mainline denominations in Kansas, as well as dozens of congregations and thousands of individual people of faith and conscience throughout the state of Kansas. We are also the state chapter of Interfaith Power & Light – the religious response to climate change. It is in this capacity that I submit testimony in support of HB2588.

The people and communities of faith and conscience that make up KIFA take as a core part of our mission, care for God’s creation. For us, this means addressing the causes of climate disruption, including the continued use of fossil fuels in our building stock. For over 10 years KIFA and our partners in the WEALTH coalition have steadfastly advocated for moving Kansas to a clean energy economy through a combination of efficiency, utility-scale wind and solar, and distributed generation, which primarily means rooftop solar. In areas of the state covered by investor-owned utilities, upwards of 40% of the utility power load is generated by renewables -- mostly wind – and that’s wonderful, but our rates of rooftop solar are significantly less, primarily due to statutory limitations on capacity and restrictions on use of the grid, leading to cost uncertainty for potential customers.

We are pleased that the solar industry, the IOUs, and pro-renewables public interest groups have reached agreement on a way forward on net-metering. From our perspective, the bill does the following:

- Clarifies definitions and removes ambiguity
- Increases the net-metering cap from 1 percent to 5 percent, ensuring long-term opportunities for customers to choose distributed generation and providing businesses market certainty
- Increases the system size limits, enabling businesses to install as large as 150kW systems (an increase of 50 kW) and residential homeowners to size as needed for their properties

This legislation is a great example of the power of collaboration, and we applaud the chairman for his support of this process, without which it might not have succeeded.

Solar energy is a great and underutilized resource in Kansas. We have as many sunny days as Florida, and many Kansans want to put solar on their roofs, but they have been deterred by capacity limitations and caps. This bill goes a long way to addressing these issues, which is why we support it going forward.

We would like to see the municipal and power providers and electricity coops join this agreement so that there is certainty throughout the state. But we support the bill as is.

Thank you for allowing me to testify on this bill, and I urge the committee to recommend HB2588 favorably to the House for passage.