

January 25th, 2023

SB 46 - Light-Mitigation for Existing Wind Farms

Oral In-Person

Proponent

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TO: Senate Utilities Committee



Chairman Olson and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide remarks on SB 46, which would require developers, owners, or operators of existing wind farms to initiate the process for installing light-mitigating technology per approval of the Federal Aviation Administration after a new power offtake agreement.

In our view, SB 46 demonstrates a good-faith response by industry to address concerns of the visual impact of wind turbine lighting. We support SB 46.

The Sierra Club, including the Kansas Chapter, has been very proactive and sensitive to wind siting impacts for decades now. That is why the Kansas Chapter developed a fair and sensible position in 2010 that provides for respect for landowners' property rights, public safety, and environmental sustainability, which includes lighting impacts.

Federal aviation rules require specific lighting on turbines; this lighting should always be minimized for aesthetic reasons, unless specific lighting is shown to reduce bird or bat mortality.

Our Sierra Club organization, nationally, echoes the same sentiment, *"The Sierra Club recognizes that all forms of power generation entail environmental tradeoffs, and that there are drawbacks to wind development. The most contentious issues include visual and wildlife impacts..."* Still, *"the Sierra Club believes that in most instances, many of the negative impacts of wind can be managed... we believe that with adequate site planning the benefits of wind power in reducing the threat of global warming and pollution will substantially outweigh wind's negative impacts."*[As stated in the Sierra Club's national wind siting advisory].

Sierra Club believes that wind developers have a responsibility to be good neighbors and we feel SB 46 helps fulfill that responsibility. We wish other industries also would follow this example of leadership and social responsibility.

One slight suggestion would be that the industry offer an option for a specific target date for retrofit for each wind project, as the public may not know when the wind farm's next new power offtake agreement will be. This could be included outside of the bill language, but we feel a specific time limit would give surrounding communities more certainty on when they can expect for their concerns on the wind energy's visual impact to be lessened.

Thank you for including these thoughts into your evaluation and please advance SB 46.

Zack Pistora | Legislative Director and State Lobbyist, Kansas Chapter of Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is the largest grassroots environmental organization dedicated to enjoying, exploring, and protecting our great outdoors. The Kansas Chapter represents our state's strongest grassroots voice on environmental matters for nearly fifty years.