



**Testimony in Support of SB 347 by Rabbi Moti Rieber, Executive Director
Senate Utilities Committee, Sen. Rob Olson, chair
February 6-7, 2018**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee –

I am the executive director of Kansas Interfaith Action, 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 social, economic, and climate justice issues. I am testifying today in support of SB 347. This bill would direct the KCC to allow natural gas and electric utilities to implement programs to help their customers save energy beginning in 2019.

It's important for me to say at the outset that Kansas Interfaith Action believes that human-caused climate change is a pressing issue that needs immediate attention. We consider this an issue of deepest moral import, which is why a rabbi is testifying in support of energy efficiency.

A meaningful and effective response to this challenge in the energy sector would encompass three elements:

1. Energy efficiency programs, to lower demand, particularly at times of peak usage
2. Distributed generation, particularly in the form of home- or neighborhood-scale solar or wind, and
3. For larger-scale production, an transition to entirely carbon-free production on the utility scale.

Kansas has come a long way in number 3, so that over 30% of our utility-scale power generation is from wind. Our performance under number 2 is the subject of another bill this morning.

But our state's performance in energy efficiency has been nothing short of abysmal. Kansas ranks 48th on the 2017 State Energy Efficiency Scorecard put out by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), consistent with how we've fared in these rankings in recent years. KIFA, and our allies in the clean energy movement, have been trying for years to a) get legislation to open the door to increased use of efficiency in Kansas' energy sector, and b) convince the KCC to take the potential of energy efficiency seriously. In 2014 we were able to pass bipartisan legislation that was intended to open the door to increased use of energy-efficiency in the state, but the KCC has chosen not to allow the implementation of EE programs that have worked just fine in Missouri. Therefore, further legislative direction is required.

Kansas Interfaith Action believes that the cheapest watt, and the cleanest watt, is the watt that isn't used. ACEEE studies indicate that Kansas could lower its demand by 23% across the sector compared to a 2012 baseline by an extensive application of demand-side efficiency programs. That's huge, but it won't happen unless Kansas makes efficiency a robust part of its energy mix.

Kansas' goal going forward should be - must be – to move to a completely carbon-free energy grid in the shortest possible time. Energy efficiency needs to be an important element in that transition. It's time for the state to take seriously the potential of energy-efficiency programs, and to strengthen our policy framework to encourage energy efficiency programs going forward. This legislation would send a strong message, and I encourage you to move it forward. Thank you.