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Rev. Sarah Oglesby-Dunegan, Board Chair**

February 25, 2019

Written Testimony in Support of SB 124 – Energy Fairness Act
Senate Utilities Committee, Sen. Ty Masterson, chair
Mr. Chairman, members of the committee –

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill. My name is Rabbi Moti Rieber, and I am the executive director of Kansas Interfaith Action, a statewide, multi-faith issue advocacy organization that brings a moral voice to Kansas public policy by educating, engaging and advocating on behalf of people of faith and the public regarding critical social, economic, and climate justice issues.

One of our main issue areas is climate disruption, which has strong faith and justice implications. Faith, because Scripture and our faith traditions teach us that we are to be stewards of Creation; we have done such a poor job of it that the way we are powering our society is causing drastic and irreversible changes in our climate, with repercussions that are only beginning to be felt. And justice, because those who will be affected first and worst by climate disruption are those who always suffer from injustice: poor people and people of color.

One of the major – I would say, inarguable – ways to address climate disruption is by the rapid decarbonization of our energy sector. In other words, we must move away from fossil-fuel-generated sources of energy, and soon. One way available to us to do this is by the large-scale deployment of distributed (consumer-level) solar power. Fortunately, prices have come down so much that people are deploying solar on an unprecedented scale. Unfortunately, investor-owned energy monopolies have responded to this development by trying to suppress it, using demand charges to strangle the solar baby in its cradle.

People who are concerned about climate change, or who simply want to get out from under monopoly energy provision, have very few options available. One of these few recourses is home-based solar generation, and people are willing to use their own money – tens of thousands of dollars – to take action on a pressing issue.

The utilities claim that people who put solar on their homes cause a burden on the rest of the ratepayers. They claim this, but they have never been asked to prove it, not by the legislature, and not by the KCC. We believe that this is a propaganda point rather than a fact, and that a fair evaluation of the costs *and benefits* of solar would find that distributed solar is a net plus to grid stability, adding power to the grid during periods of peak demand and forestalling the necessity to build additional, costly supply.

The KCC has shown itself incapable of addressing the changing nature of Kansas' energy needs, or the pressing necessity of rapid action on climate change. It has allowed the IOUs to put onerous and unnecessary demand charges on Kansans whose only crime is wanting to use their own money to take action on a pressing issue with, as I say, deep moral implications.

Kansas Interfaith Action believes that distributed solar is a key element of building our clean energy future, and to building resilience to climate disruption into our energy system. As such, it should be encouraged rather than suppressed.

We ask the committee to pass SB 124 on to the full Senate positively for consideration, so that energy policy can be made for the good of the people, and not just for the interests in profit-driven energy monopolies.

Thank you for your attention.