OVERLAND PARK

KANSAS

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

To: Senate Utilities Committee

From: Kevin Walker, Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Advocacy
Overland Park Chamber of Commerce

Date: 12 February 2020

Chairman Masterson and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the more than 800 business members of the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 339.

As one of the many Kansas communities situated along the Kansas/Missouri border we know all too well how challenging it is to compete in the arena of new business recruitment. Despite some of the negative publicity surrounding the so-called economic border war with Missouri, economic development professionals throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area frequently work cooperatively to recruit new business to the region.

Economic development professionals in Kansas have asked for one thing – the ability to compete on a level playing field. Unfortunately, despite the progress that has been made in recent months, the playing field is still tilted to favor Missouri. One impediment is addressed by this bill.

SB 339 creates an economic development rider (EDR) for energy providers that mirrors what is offered by the State of Missouri. Leveling this playing field would allow Kansas-side communities to compete for many of the projects that have too frequently chosen the Missouri-side of the metro because of their advantageous incentives. Winning these types of projects, such as data centers, aviation, food processing and advanced manufacturing, would be a major boost for the Kansas economy.

The recently released London Economic Study commissioned by the State made it clear that an EDR could help make Kansas competitive within the region.

As I stated before, as economic development professionals we ask that we be able to compete on a level playing field and this bill does just that. We believe this bill has many upsides and puts one more tool in the economic development toolbox.

The Overland Park Chamber urges this committee to approve SB 339.