

Dorothy Barnett  
Climate + Energy Project  
SB 24 – Energy Choice Action  
Oral Opposition

Chairman Siewert, Ranking member Kuether and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to SB 24, the Energy Choice Act.

My name is Dorothy Barnett, I direct the Climate + Energy Project (CEP), a fourteen-year-old Kansas based nonprofit. CEP works to support the transition to a carbon free economy through programs and policy. Energy efficiency and renewable energy are not only good for our economy but good for our health and environment as well. Here in Kansas and across the nation, the clean energy economy is growing and according to evidence outlined in a recent report - [The Speed of the Energy Transition](#),<sup>1</sup> we're clearly experiencing a rapid energy transition scenario. The question before this committee, is if Kansas cities will have freedom to benefit from their investments in the lowest cost resource, or whether the state will take away that Home Rule right.

This legislation would take away the ability of local governments to support new, all-electric buildings via their building codes and other policies.

This bill is problematic for many reasons, including climate impacts, health and safety risks, affordability, and local control for communities. As evidenced by the February extreme weather, and the failure of natural gas to affordably meet the needs of Kansans during the polar vortex, this is not the time for this bill. Instead of locking in this fuel source for the long term, which could settle Kansans with high bills and unreliable power for the next 50 years, we should support the gas industry in their move toward renewable gas so they can be part of the energy transition.

To meet our climate goals, we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings. If we switch to efficient electric appliances and equipment, powered by an increasingly renewable electric grid, we can cut U.S. climate-warming carbon emissions by half a billion tons per year, while delivering benefits like cleaner air indoors.

Electrification also reduces health and safety risks from gas and its infrastructure. According to a [new report](#) by the Rocky Mountain Institute<sup>2</sup> it is actually cheaper to build all electric new buildings.

Lastly, passing this bill is a local control issue. Kansas voters granted cities constitutional Home Rule in 1960 and provided cities the opportunity needed to self-govern and recognized that local decisions for our communities should be made by the people who make up that community. Why should this issue be allowed to circumvent our constitution?

If the committee does decide to move this bill forward, we would encourage you to consider amending it to make it clear that cities can still make decisions for their own buildings including affordable housing developments, that it is not the intention of this legislature to limit investments in energy efficiency and to sunset the bill in five years

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/whitepapers/the-speed-of-the-energy-transition>

<sup>2</sup> <https://rmi.org/insight/the-new-economics-of-electrifying-buildings>