

**SENATE UTILITIES COMMITTEE
PAUL JOHNSON – KANSAS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
PROPONENT FOR SB 128 – JANUARY 31, 2007**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 128. My name is Paul Johnson and I am testifying for the Kansas Catholic Conference. This bill provides a good first step in identifying the most cost-effective energy conservation practices and identifying the homes that are in greatest need of energy improvements. Catholic Charity offices all across Kansas are inundated with request for energy assistance but the Charity offices can respond to a very small number of the requests. Often times, the same clients are requesting energy assistance and families are moving repeatedly to find affordable housing. 40% of Kansas' renters are cost-burdened in paying over 30% of their income for housing and utility costs.

The Conference would request two improvements to SB 128:

- The energy conservation education advisory group should be expanded to include a representative from the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services Low Income Home Energy Assistance program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP serves over 40,000 households with special energy assistance needs. A strategy could be developed to target these homes of greatest need by coordinating with the Weatherization Assistance Program and utility-based conservation programs.
- The advisory group should report annually back to the Senate and House Utilities Committee on their progress. Such a report should build off of Bruce Snead's Energy Efficiency and Conservation in the Public, Residential, Commercial and Industrial Sectors report and prioritize the most cost effective energy practices for Kansas. This report should also include estimates on the energy efficiency potential for various energy investments. For example, Kansas has 1 million housing units with half of them constructed prior to 1960. How many of these housing units are adequately insulated (with special attention paid to rental units)? Given the summer peaking electric load we have in Kansas, what is the efficiency of existing central air and room air conditioners? Kansas needs to develop a real world snap shot of the potential of energy efficiency and coordinate this analysis with the Kansas Corporation Commission's deliberations on utility-based energy conservation programs.

The Kansas Catholic Conference and the Catholic Charity directors look forward to working with the Advisory committee and sharing data to target and assist the families that have the greatest home energy needs.