



# WEALTH Policy, Civic Engagement, and You! with Dorothy Barnett Climate + Energy Project

*Excerpts from a series of CEP LIVE on Facebook events that highlight policies impacting Kansas WEALTH and outline effective civic engagement strategies*  
**WATER – ENERGY – AIR – LAND – TRANSPORTATION – HEALTH = KANSAS WEALTH**

## OVERVIEW

Dorothy Barnett, executive director of the Climate + Energy Project, kicked off the series on January 16, 2018, with a discussion of energy policy priorities and tips for civic engagement. The Climate + Energy Project (CEP) hosts WEALTH Day, an environmental advocacy and education event set for March 15, 2018, at the Kansas Capitol. CEP is a nonprofit focused on practical solutions for a clean energy future.

## TOP WEALTH POLICY ISSUES FOR THE CLIMATE + ENERGY PROJECT

- CEP is focused on two issues this year. The first is working to **increase opportunities for Kansans to access energy efficiency**. Energy efficiency programs are key to the mission and the work that CEP has done for more than 10 years now. Plenty of work remains. Out of all 50 states, we remain 48th on the [American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy scorecard](#). Neighboring states that we compete with for economic development are all offering energy efficiency programs. They all have lower electricity rates than we do. We know that we're missing a huge opportunity for energy efficiency. KCP&L customers right across the state line in Missouri have access to robust energy efficiency programs, rebates, and incentives at all levels for people wanting to try to reduce their energy bills. To put Kansas on a level playing field, CEP's Clean Energy Business Council supported [Senate Bill 347](#), which updates the **Kansas Energy Efficiency Investment Act**.
- The second issue CEP is focused on is [Senate Bill 322](#), introduced in the Senate Utilities Committee. This bill would **return us to the 2009 Net Metering and Interconnection Act**. SB 322 would not only **increase the size limits of residential and small commercial distributed generation or solar projects**, but it would also **include protection from discriminatory rates for solar customers**. Over the past four years, Kansas investor-owned utilities have tried to add higher charges to people who either have solar on their rooftops or businesses or who want to. This uncertainty is limiting the scope and the availability of solar power.
- CEP also engages in policy at the Kansas Corporation Commission. Currently the Kansas Corporation Commissioners are deliberating on a **proposed merger of Kansas City Power & Light and Westar Energy**. This is a major merger that will affect the majority of Kansans. There will be some opportunities for you all to let your voice be heard. On January 22, 2018, in Topeka, citizens were able to make comments at the public hearing. Comments also [can be submitted online](#). For clean energy supporters, it's important to let the commissioners know that you would like a continued investment and a commitment for clean energy. That should be a key piece of supporting any legislation.



The Climate + Energy Project seeks to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions in America's Heartland through the ambitious deployment of energy efficiency and renewable energy, in policy and practice.

Join the Conversation at [climateandenergy.org](http://climateandenergy.org), on Facebook & Twitter @CEPHeartland

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY TIPS

- The most important thing is to **engage in a way that works for you**. Some people aren't sure who their representative is, or who to contact, or how to contact them. If you don't know who represents you at the Statehouse, go to [openstates.org](http://openstates.org) and type in your address. It will tell you who your representative is, who your state senator is, who your congressional representation is.
- Once you figure out who, **determine the policy issues you care about**. If you—like me—are really passionate about energy efficiency and think that we should have access to more programs, that's an issue you can learn more about on our website, [climateandenergy.org](http://climateandenergy.org). You also can go to [aceee.org](http://aceee.org) and learn about what other states are doing. But inform yourself about energy efficiency. Ask questions.
- **Personal visits and phone calls** are really impactful when you're talking about issues that matter to you. If you call the Kansas Corporation Commission and say, "I'd like to leave a public comment about the merger," it will be recorded and it will become a part of the public record for the commissioners. Be respectful. Even if you don't agree with your legislator, think about them as a person whom you probably have something in common with. They care about Kansas or they wouldn't be serving Kansas—that's something that we always like to keep in mind.
- **Advocacy days** that are focused on the issues that you care about are a really great way to get involved. If you have never been to a WEALTH Day or other advocacy day at the Statehouse, I would encourage you to make time for that. We provide information about interacting with legislators, and it's a great way to go with someone to visit your legislator.
- When legislators return home for the weekends, many of them have coffees or other public meetings. It's a great way that's a little more low-key to sit across the table at a coffee and visit with a legislator about the things you care about. So those **local interactions** are as important as coming to the Statehouse.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Learn about and advocate for Water, Energy, Air, Land, Transportation, and Health (WEALTH) in Kansas with the Climate + Energy Project and other sponsor organizations at WEALTH Day on March 15, 2018, at the Kansas Statehouse.

- Get up-to-date on current environmental advocacy
- Visit the Solutions Showcase
- Participate in WEALTH Forums throughout the day
- Enjoy the Local Foods Luncheon
- Sample new ideas at the Cookies and Conservation Conversation
- Meet with your legislators

Connect with CEP on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CEPHeartland) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/CEPHeartland) and sign up for our [email updates](http://bit.ly/2018WEALTHDay).

**Join us for WEALTH Day on March 15<sup>th</sup> at the Kansas Statehouse!**

RSVP: <http://bit.ly/2018WEALTHDay>



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