



## ***Kansas Chapter - Sierra Club***

**Bill Griffith**– Chair, Energy Committee

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Letter of Opposition to Westar Rate Increase; Docket No. 15-WSEE-115-RTS  
To the Kansas Corporation Commission:

Honorable Commissioners,

I am Bill Griffith, chair of the energy committee with the Kansas Chapter of Sierra Club. Our organization, comprised of ~4000 official members and 14,000 online supporters across Kansas, is dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enjoying our environment in Kansas. I served the state club for many years, and my specific niche of expertise is in analyzing smart energy systems. I have installed solar on my own house, and work to help Kansans do the same.

On behalf of the Kansas Sierra Club, I come to you today in asking you to reject Westar's proposal and pull the brakes on the runaway train of rate increases on Westar's residential customers.

Westar customers have seen nearly 20 rate increases in the last 6 years approved by the KCC. Average summertime electric bills have gone up nearly 60% for Westar residential customers, while its investors and shareholders capture a guaranteed return on equity of up to 10%. This is unfair and counterproductive to making progress in a new utility paradigm of balancing energy, environmental, and social justice responsibilities. The Kansas Sierra Club stands with consumer and environmental allies in opposing the heavy hike in electric rates both to nearly all its customers, but especially those who utilize solar. While our Kansas Chapter supports rate restructuring that reduces utility incentives for volumetric energy sales, Westar's current rate proposal goes too far in raising rates without enhancing their "efficient and sufficient service," nor providing a better rate structure to transition away from ongoing costs to ratepayers associated with fossil-fuel dependence.

While aggressive renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives have provided noticeable benefits in other states, it seems that Kansas has yet to realize its full potential; despite being one of the best states as far as having available renewable resources. I encourage the Commission to call for an independent study analyzing the value of solar and impacts of net metering. With such a study, we can fairly assess the costs and benefits of solar to both utilities, their customers, local communities, and the electrical grid at large.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bill Griffith

