



Kansas Chapter - Sierra Club

Richard Mabion – Chair, Environmental Justice Website: www.kansas.sierraclub.org
Email: Rmabion@sbcglobal.net Chapter Address: **9844 Georgia, Kansas City KS 66109**

July 21st, 2015

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

Honorable Commissioners,

I am Richard Mabion, chair of the environmental justice committee with the Kansas Chapter of Sierra Club, and also President of the NAACP in Kansas City Kansas. I have dedicated my life to social justice and ensuring all people (regardless of race and income) get fair treatment of the law, economic opportunity, and a healthy environment. Over the past several years, I have worked in educating people in lower-income communities in Kansas City and Wichita on how to conserve energy and make their homes more energy efficient.

From my experience, I have seen firsthand how people can struggle in paying their electric bills. The upsurge in costs in recent years have only made things harder. But I have also seen the benefit that energy efficiency and renewable energy investments can be for improving peoples' lives, helping family budgets, and jumpstarting local economies.

Westar's latest rate proposal will undoubtedly choke our lower-income areas in a time when they need a breather. People deserve affordable energy, but also energy that adds benefits of new jobs, lower bills, and cleaner air. Solar energy has economic and social advantages for lower-income communities, but not if high fixed charges are created.

In a new era of energy technology and electricity use, there is space for investor-owned utilities to be financially successful in providing affordable energy *to all* its customers, and for solar energy to advance our energy economy *for all* people. However, if Westar gets its way and you approve this rate proposal, it will only worsen the odds for struggling people and local communities to achieve greater autonomy over their energy costs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Richard Mabion