



Westar: A rate hike for all, not just solar

Media coverage of a Tuesday hearing in Topeka about a proposed mandatory fee hike by Westar Energy ([DOCKET NO. 15-WSEE-115-RTS](#)) has primarily focused on the impacts of Westar's proposal on rooftop solar customers.

This makes it easy to lose sight of the fact that Westar's proposal will increase the mandatory fees that all customers pay - regardless of how much energy they use - by 125 percent by 2019.

According to an analysis by the [Citizens Utility Ratepayers Board](#), Westar's mandatory fee hike includes \$51.5 million in pure profit, and it will disproportionately impact people who use the least energy. Low energy users will pay disproportionately more, while the largest energy users will pay disproportionately less. In this way, mandatory fee hikes take away incentives for people to use energy more efficiently and therefore lead to more waste in addition to significantly higher bills. Under Westar's proposal, Kansas families will pay over twice as much in mandatory fees per year by 2019, regardless of how much energy they use.

Westar is actively seeking to prevent certain arguments from being part of the Kansas Corporation Commissions' deliberations. On Tuesday, Westar filed a motion to strike expert testimony provided by the Climate and Energy Project, a Kansas-based organization working to advance energy efficiency and the use of renewables, and by Diane Munns-a former president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners-on behalf of the Environmental Defense Fund.

Testimony from both organizations highlighted the disproportionate impact on low-income ratepayers and those who use the least energy, and the fact that mandatory fee hikes remove incentives for ratepayers to conserve energy, thereby lowering their utility bills.

Find both of the testimonies [here](#), or at the direct links below.

[Climate + Energy Project Testimony](#) [Environmental Defense Fund Testimony](#)

Today is the last public hearing-in Wichita-on Westar's proposed mandatory fee hike. As the KCC and ratepayers weigh Westar's proposal, it's important that all voices with a stake in the issue be included. It is likewise critical that the public be given a full picture of what is at stake.

Spokespeople available to speak to the disproportionate impacts to low-income families and other low-energy users, and the chilling effect on energy efficiency and energy conservation, are included below, in addition to a [media backgrounder](#) providing additional quotes and information about the issues.

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