



WEALTH Policy, Civic Engagement, and You! with Zack Pistora Kansas Sierra Club

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

Zack Pistora of the Kansas Sierra Club joined the Climate + Energy Project on January 23, 2018, to discuss policy priorities for the 2018 legislative session. Kansas Sierra Club is part of the national Sierra Club, started in 1892. The Kansas chapter, with nearly 5,000 members, serves as the grassroots voice for environmental protection in the Statehouse.

TOP WEALTH POLICY ISSUES FOR THE KANSAS SIERRA CLUB

- The most important environmental issue in Kansas is **water**. In Western Kansas, people rely on the Ogallala Aquifer for their wells; if they are farmers, they use it in their agriculture. In the cities, we're running out of water. One way that we can help at the state level is that we have water programs to help **conserve water**. On the eastern side of the state, we have issues with **water quality**: harmful algal blooms, sediment in our reservoirs taking up water storage. The state has water programs to do something about that but hasn't been funding those in recent years. By law, \$8 million is supposed to come from state government into the [state water plan fund](#). We would like to see the state pony up their share of those funds.
- This year we're dealing with **new earthquakes in Kansas**. We're understanding more and more that injection wells, new oil and gas drilling activities, are causing some cumulative weight on our geological faults underground, causing them to slip and thus cause an earthquake. We don't think it's right for taxpayers, the citizens of Kansas, their businesses, public institutions to be affected by any damages that can happen with earthquakes. We have some ideas and want to get more of a discussion about earthquakes at the Statehouse.
- Another top issue we're concerned with this year is **noxious weeds and pesticide drift**. The state has talked for a number of years now about whether we should add weeds to the list, who should have the authority to decide those weeds in an emergency situation, and other options. This has been an ongoing process on whether we should move that authority from the Legislature to the executive branch and have an advisory committee at the state level.
- The proposed Tyson chicken plant near Tonganoxie raised some other issues. People in the community didn't find out until the day the announcement was made that the processing facility was coming. We're working to try to make sure that the rules are clear on what type of **agriculture facilities** come to Kansas, how we deal with the communications process, and what type of setback distances and community protections exist. If the community, like Tonganoxie, was opposed to it, they can petition the county and get a countywide vote on such a facility. They already do that with swine facilities in Kansas, so we'd like to see them do that with chicken facilities, too.



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, on Facebook & Twitter @CEPHeartland

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY TIPS FROM ZACK PISTORA

- In today's age, folks are realizing that if they want to try to work for a better society, they need to get involved. That means first, **get to know your government** at the local and state levels especially. Try to find out who those officials are—maybe attend a city or county meeting sometime.
- **Come up to the Statehouse.** Legislators are interested in hearing what their constituents say. Meet them at their office, attend a committee hearing. Call up your legislator sometime. Introduce yourself, say hello. Tell that legislator that you're a voter, that you're interested in policy and that you're concerned with these sets of issues—not just the environment, but what else might be on your mind.
- Along with that, **educate yourself on the issues.** Do your homework. Find out the topics and maybe look to organizations, like the Climate + Energy Project or Kansas Sierra Club, to help you out with that. We're working on research and education at all times, on all these issues. If we can be of any help, we'd be glad to. It's good to think for yourself and educate yourself. Research, go to the library and check out the book on the subject or search online. That's one part of civic engagement—to be civically minded and educated.
- Last but not least, **speak your mind.** There are public forums, public town halls that legislators host, and bills up here that might spark your interest. You can write in or speak to a committee, give testimony. Your voice matters. The fact that you chime in, that you call a legislator's office and tell the secretary how you feel about a bill, about an issue, only serves as a kind of well-rounded perspective of what these legislators are dealing with when they go back and forth on the arguments and reasons on what is the best policy we can make in Kansas.

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 15th 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 with your legislator
- Sample new ideas at the Cookies and Conservation Conversation
- Meet with your legislators

Connect with CEP on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and sign up for our [email updates](#).

Join us for WEALTH Day on March 15th at the Kansas Statehouse!

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



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