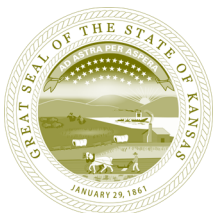


CURB News

News from the Watchdog for Residential and Small Commercial Utility Consumers

SECOND QUARTER 2026



THE CITIZENS' UTILITY RATEPAYER BOARD OF KANSAS

Settlement Reached in Liberty Rate Case

KCC Docket No. [26-EPDE-0180-RTS](#)

Liberty operates as an electric public utility in southeast Kansas with service areas in parts of Cherokee and Labette counties. On December 31, 2025, Liberty filed an application requesting a base rate increase of \$15.8 million (approx. 93%). As part of the increase, Liberty is requesting to recover the costs of three wind projects (Neosho Ridge, North Fork Ridge, and Kings Point) in base rates. Along with the wind projects, Liberty attributes investment in utility infrastructure to modernize transmission and distribution assets as the biggest drivers of its increase request.

In May 2026, CURB and KCC Staff each filed written testimonies addressing Liberty's application. CURB recommended an overall base rate increase of \$6,569,373. CURB did not support inclusion of the wind projects in base rates, expressing concern that the wind projects may not produce a net benefit to ratepayers. Under Liberty's initial proposal, the fixed customer charge for residential customers would increase from \$14.25 to \$25.00, but CURB recommended the customer charge remain at \$14.25 and the increase be wholly applied through the volumetric energy rate.

After written testimonies were filed, the Parties (CURB, KCC Staff, and Liberty) began settlement negotiations. The Parties reached a unanimous agreement which was filed on June 12, 2026. The agreed upon increase to Liberty's base rates is \$8,775,000. If approved, the increase will be applied in two phases to soften the bill impact: half of the increase will take effect beginning August 1, 2026, and the full increase will be applied after one year.

Under the agreement, Liberty will be allowed to recover the costs of the wind projects in base rates. During the first year of the phase-in, half of the financial benefits associated with the wind projects (energy sales, transmission congestion rights, renewable energy credits) will flow to customers through Liberty's Energy Cost Adjustment. Thereafter, all financial benefits associated with the wind projects will flow to customers.

Under Liberty's initial proposal, the fixed customer charge for residential customers would increase to \$25.00 and the total estimated average bill increase for a typical residential customer with monthly usage of 1,000 kWh would be \$54.45 (40%). Under the agreement, the residential customer charge will increase to \$18.00, and the total estimated average residential bill increase is \$27.71 (20.5%).

On June 23, 2026, the Commission held an evidentiary hearing on the settlement agreement. This hearing was recorded and can be viewed on the Commission's [YouTube](#) channel. The Commission's order is due August 28, 2026; however, the Parties have requested an expedited order for an effective date of August 1, 2026.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Settlement Reached in Liberty Rate Case	1
KCC Approves Rate Increase in Black Hills Abbreviated Rate Case	2
2026 Legislative Session — Utility Bill Overview	2

KCC Approves Rate Increase in Black Hills Abbreviated Rate Case

KCC Docket No. [26-BHCG-0240-RTS](#)

Black Hills Energy (“Black Hills”) operates as a natural gas public utility in Kansas, with major service areas including Wichita and Lawrence. On March 2, 2026, Black Hills filed an Abbreviated Rate Case Application with the KCC to update plant-in-service balances and to “true-up” construction work in progress amounts. Black Hills requested an incremental revenue increase of \$2,431,948.

After thoroughly auditing the request, both KCC Staff and CURB recommended approval of the requested incremental revenue increase of \$2,431,948.

On June 25, 2026, the Commission issued an order approving the requested revenue increase. As a result, the monthly residential customer charge will increase from \$21.00 to \$21.70, and the monthly small commercial customer charge will increase from \$32.00 to \$33.07. A typical residential customer who uses 53.6 therms per month will experience an average monthly bill increase of \$1.25.

2026 Legislative Session — Utility Bill Overview

Along with our duties before the KCC, CURB also represents residential and small commercial customers before the Kansas Legislature. CURB reviews all utility-related bill proposals and often presents testimony on such bills before the Senate Utilities Committee and the House Energy, Utilities, and Telecommunications Committee.

The 2026 Kansas legislative session adjourned on April 10, 2026. From CURB’s perspective, the bills below are the most significant utility-related bills that were enacted during the 2026 session. Several other bills were put forward during the session but were not enacted into law.

- **[House Bill \(“HB”\) 2435](#)** – This bill authorizes natural gas utilities to recover growth-related investments as part of the existing Gas System Reliability Surcharge. Under the bill, natural gas utilities cannot increase the surcharge for residential customers any more than \$1.35 per month in each update filing. CURB opposed this bill and successfully persuaded legislators to amend HB 2435 to include the \$1.35 cap to mitigate excessive bill impacts on residential customers.
- **[Senate Bill \(“SB”\) 348](#)** – This bill exempts any electric public utility that is a non-for-profit wholly owned subsidiary of an electric cooperative utility from the KCC’s jurisdiction. Southern Pioneer Electric Company, operating in western Kansas as a subsidiary of Pioneer Electric Cooperative, was the only utility that qualified for deregulation under this statute. CURB filed neutral testimony on this bill and successfully persuaded legislators to amend SB 348 to grant members of a deregulated not-for-profit subsidiary of a cooperative the option to vote to return to regulation under KCC jurisdiction.
- **[SB 380](#)** – This bill requires electric suppliers that own or operate public electric vehicle (“EV”) fast charging stations to offer fair, reasonable, and non-discriminatory rates and services to other entities providing public EV fast charging services. SB 380 prohibits such electric suppliers from creating a competitive advantage for utility-owned EV fast charging stations. CURB filed neutral testimony on this bill.

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We're on the Web!

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ABOUT THE CITIZENS' UTILITY RATEPAYER BOARD

Established in 1988, the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board (CURB) is an agency focused on advocacy for residential and small commercial utility consumers in Kansas. The Board is composed of five (5) appointed volunteer members representing the four congressional districts in Kansas and one at-large member. CURB was initially founded by the Chairman of the Kansas Corporation Commission upon a perceived need for a stronger consumer advocate. CURB has evolved into an independent agency, currently employing a consumer counsel, three supporting attorneys, three analysts, and two administrative staff.

OUR MISSION: To zealously protect the interests of residential and small commercial utility ratepayers before the Kansas Corporation Commission and the Kansas legislature.

OUR VISION: To protect Kansas residential and small commercial utility ratepayers by promoting the delivery of optimal utility services—being safe, reliable and technically robust, environmentally sensible, cost-effective, and equitably provided to all Kansas utility consumers at just prices.

The Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board



Leilani Grey
Chair
Topeka



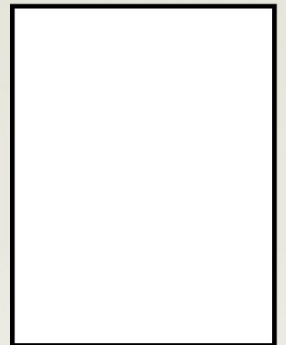
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