

Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board

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SENATE UTILITIES COMMITTEE S.B. 580

Testimony on Behalf of the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board
By David Springe, Consumer Counsel
February 20, 2008

Chairman Emler and members of the committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony on S.B. 580. The Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board supports this bill for the following reasons:

Senate Bill 580 "creates" a weatherization assistance program account within the state housing trust fund, with moneys credited to the account used to fund grants under the weatherization assistance program to increase housing energy efficiency. Of import in this bill is that the funding commitment will be \$2,000,000 annually. This increase in funding, and the commitment to annual funding, will allow the weatherization assistance program to ramp up its activities to serve more Kansas consumers annually. With the commitment of funding, the weatherization assistance program should be able to maintain this increased activity level into the future.

Utility costs for consumers have increased in recent years, especially the cost of natural gas for heating. The cost of electricity is also starting to increase as fuel costs increase and as an aging infrastructure needs to be updated to meet new demands and new environmental standards. Conservation, weatherization and energy efficiency will become a more important tool to help consumers manage these increased utility costs. The weatherization assistance program is one of the few state programs offered in Kansas, and the modest funding commitment provided by this bill is a step in the right direction for Kansas consumers.

For the above reasons, CURB urges the committee to pass this bill.