

Kansas House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee
Testimony of Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board
Written Testimony (Only) in Support of
HB 2181
February 9, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee. My name is David Nickel. I am the Consumer Counsel for the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board (CURB). I am furnishing testimony in support of House Bill (HB) 2181.

HB 2181 seeks to amend K.S.A. 66-117b by requiring the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) to report to the Kansas legislature the average residential, commercial and industrial electric rates of electric public utilities in Kansas in comparison to the average residential, commercial and industrial rates of electric public utilities from at least nine states in the region, including states contiguous to Kansas. The information is supplemental to the report that the KCC provides to the legislature by February of each year. K.S.A. 66-117b currently requires that the KCC report to the Kansas legislature any changes to rates, joint rates, or schedules of charges, or to any rule or regulation or practice pertaining to the service or rates of a public utility or common carrier approved by the KCC during the preceding fiscal year.

CURB believes that the KCC has previously been able to supply the type of information outlined in HB 2181 to the legislature, such that continuation of these types of information in its reports would not be unduly burdensome. However, CURB is open to any amendments suggested by the KCC as necessary to enhance the reports or to keep the reports made in accordance with K.S.A. 66-117b from being unduly burdensome.

It is important to note that, by law, KCC decisions and orders in rate cases are based upon its determination that items making up the utility's rate base are prudent and that the utilities have been provided an opportunity for a reasonable rate of return on capital investments, rather than being upon the basis of what utilities in other states charge utility customers. Nonetheless, CURB believes that by the information outlined in HB 2181 can be useful to the legislature in its decisions on legislative policies designed to maintain Kansas electric utility rates at reasonable levels. CURB strongly believes that all stakeholders in the utility regulation process should strive to keep ratepayer utility rates at reasonable levels. The information provided in the KCC reports as provided by HB 2181 may help to keep that goal as a focal point for stakeholders.

CURB provides its support for HB 2181.