



Written Testimony: HB21-1269
Ashley Smith to: committees.lcs.ga 05/25/2021 06:26 AM

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Good afternoon Senators.

I am Ashley Smith, the Mayor of Canon City. I am not here with a request to be able to explore transitioning to 100% renewable energy...but to simply provide my community with the basic need for simply affordable energy.

We have a median household income that's near poverty level coupled with THE highest electric utility rates in the State. The State Public Utilities Commission study shows that Black Hills' residential rates are 34% higher than the statewide average of all electricity providers, and 47% higher than Xcel Energy's residential rates.

Out of frustration with high energy rates, our citizens voted in the Nov 2020 election NOT to renew our franchise agreement with Black Hills. Now, we are without a franchise agreement to regulate Black Hills use of our easements, and without a practical, nor cost effective way seek more competitive energy options. As an elected official, we have been given a mandate via election to probe for lower utility rates, but essentially we are stuck.

For example, if we wished to have a different utility company to take over Black Hills, as our provider, we would have to prove in court that Black Hills has failed to provide electricity to Cañon City and condemn their infrastructure or they would have to voluntarily agree to sell their infrastructure (which, as essentially a legal monopoly in our region, they have already declined an offer from Pueblo). Both would require going through a lengthy, complicated, and costly process in court, the PUC, and with a multi-multi-million dollar price tag.

These are stifling state mandated requirements that our community cannot afford to take on. We need to be able to access affordable electricity alternatives, with a less restrictive process. I would like to ask you to support this investigatory study to explore the ability to adopt legislation for community wholesale energy choice options.



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HB21-1269 Testimony – Senate Transportation & Energy Committee – May 25, 2021

- My name is Julie Gill and I am the Executive Director of LEAN Energy US – a non-profit trade association whose mission is the expansion of Community Choice Energy nationwide. Thank you for allowing me to make public comment today. LEAN’s purpose is to advance the vision of an equitable and clean energy America. I am not here asking you to support an energy model that has not yet been proven or one that hasn’t resulted in positive benefits in the communities that local clean energy provides. This model already exists in 9 other states serving nearly 1,200 cities and counties nationally and growing with 5 states in addition to Colorado actively exploring it.
- LEAN has been integral in every step in the formation of the CCAs in California starting with the first one in Marin. Now there are 24 and growing in California which represents roughly 11 million customers.
- Previous amendments were added to address renewables goals. In California, the CCAs are on track to meet more than DOUBLE their requirements in the integrated resource plans by 2023. This is the docket where all load serving entities have to verify their plans to meet all of the requirements such as GHG, renewable portfolio goals and resource adequacy to name a few. A quick highlight of the NEW clean energy that CCAs have uniquely contracted with to bring on line totaling over 6,000 MW while in the same timeframe, the CPUC directed only 3,300 MW of procurement for IOUs despite parties advocating we need robust procurement of renewable and carbon free resources to meet our goals. Specifically CCAs have procured the following amounts:
 - 3,860 MW solar
 - 1,30 MW wind
 - 1,120 MW energy storage
 - 14 MW geothermal
 - 7 MW biogas
- The California CCAs are moving forward to procure long duration energy storage without anyone forcing them to do so. They have the ability to

innovate and they are doing just that! Investor-Owned Utilities wait for the public utilities commission to direct them to procure. At this juncture in California, the studies have shown that long duration energy storage is needed by mid-decade in the amount of 1,000 to 1,600 MW yet only the CCAs are stepping forward to invest in the technology that will allow for the reliable integration of renewables.

- Local communities are better able to strategically serve their own citizens and use the revenue to address issues in their communities instead of to corporate shareholders. They have been able to respond nimbly to Covid 19 – they have provided bill assistance, discounted rates, given millions of dollars to grocery workers, food banks and many innovative programs. They also have robust electric vehicle charging stations and rebate, building decarbonization and electrification, energy efficiency, additional local solar rebates, demand response and microgrids.
- Community Choice Energy is a game-changing model that is accelerating our country's transition to a clean energy future without Federal legislation or taxpayer subsidies. As Colorado looks to build back better as we emerge from Covid, this provides an incredible opportunity to create a new energy future. One of equity, one of local choice, one of reinvestment in communities rather than shareholders, and on that we can be proud of the legacy we leave without the burden of additional costs and taxes. LEAN stands here today ready to help support Colorado through the study process all the way through the successful implementation.
- Thank you for your time and your consideration of this important bill.