



**MICHAEL O'DONNELL, II**  
**Commissioner - Second District**

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS**

*COUNTY COURTHOUSE • SUITE 320 • 525 NORTH MAIN • WICHITA, KANSAS 67203-3759*  
*TELEPHONE (316) 660-9300 • FAX (316) 383-8275*  
*e-mail: michael.o'donnell@sedgwick.gov*

January 17, 2017

Pat Apple  
Chairman, Kansas Corporation Commission  
1500 SW Arrowhead Road  
Topeka, KS 66604-4027

To Chairman Apple and Commissioners,

The State of Kansas is at an important crossroads in our effort to meet the energy demands of today while also preparing for the requirements of tomorrow. Two of our most important, long-time partners in addressing our state's energy needs have been Westar Energy and KCP&L. Their mutual commitment to building a diversified portfolio of generation mitigates our risk for what the future may hold while continuing to keep our current energy costs low, which, as you know, is key to attracting businesses, investment and residents to our great state.

A key contributor to our success in growing Kansas' economy will be keeping the price of energy low, expanding infrastructure to move our resources to market and expanding the options available to employers who wish to invest in renewables. I also will continue to support an all-inclusive energy policy that supports local production of affordable and reliable energy. In all of these efforts, KCP&L and Westar Energy have been valuable partners.

As you know, both KCP&L and Westar are critically important companies to our state, both in terms of the jobs they create as well as the energy they supply to our communities. We need them to be successful and, knowing that they were considering a sale, I was relieved when it was announced earlier this year that KCP&L was the company that won the bidding to acquire Westar.

This transaction is a significant opportunity for Kansas and one that will have a substantial impact on citizens throughout our state. I am pleased that a company that has operated in Kansas for more than 100 years is combining with Westar. To endorse a transaction of this nature, I wanted to understand more about the plan for the combined company and what it will mean for Kansas residents and businesses. After

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speaking with the management teams of both companies and hearing from them regarding their plans for the future, I support this transaction and believe it will bring many benefits for the future of Kansas.

Starting with the initial announcement, KCP&L and Westar leadership have both made it abundantly clear that this merger is about creating a stronger and more efficient utility to serve Kansans while preserving the local jobs and community engagement that have been a hallmark of Westar over the years. Unlike other likely buyers, the combined company will have nearly two-thirds of its customers in Kansas. If Kansas does not have competitive electric rates to help facilitate strong economic growth, then Kansas will not prosper and neither will KCP&L. Not only has KCP&L publicly announced plans to keep the current Westar headquarters in Topeka, they also have committed to placing senior leadership in that location. Clearly, the KCP&L leadership team knows how important Westar and its employees are to our State.

KCP&L and Westar have made public commitments that their combination will help maintain affordable energy rates in Kansas by creating significant operational savings. In addition, both KCP&L and Westar are committed to renewable energy. Once combined, KCP&L and Westar will have one of the largest portfolios of wind energy in the United States, and the vast majority of it is in Kansas, representing billions of dollars in investment in our state, creating local jobs and fostering local economic development. Small businesses, agriculture, industry and our residents all stand to benefit from this merger and the commitments to Kansas that come with it.

When it comes to economic development, KCP&L is one of the most aggressive and accomplished electric utilities in the United States. KCP&L has a full-time staff devoted to recruiting companies and good paying jobs to Kansas. With rates that are below the national average, coupled with tools enabled by this Commission such as economic development riders, incentives and revenue justification to extend electrical infrastructure to companies interested in locating in Kansas, KCP&L is a relentless steward for our business friendly state. In addition, KCP&L is the only regulated utility in the U.S. to be a fully accredited economic development organization by the International Economic Development Council.

In so many ways, this merger makes perfect sense for both companies, their customers and our region. KCP&L has been operating in Kansas for over 100 years. They know Kansas and they are committed to helping us achieve our full potential. The two companies also have a number of joint assets and have been partners for a number of years, so I expect the integration process to be smooth and beneficial for employees, customers and Kansas.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this transaction and for your important service to our State.

Sincerely,



Michael O'Donnell  
Chair Pro Tem  
Sedgwick County Commission

cc: Commissioner Shari Feist Albrecht  
Commissioner Jay Emler