

KANSAS

2012 State Legislature Profile and Summary

Capitol City: Topeka

Governor: Sam Brownback(R). Former U.S. Congressman and Senator. Elected November 2010. Four year term.

Primary Elections: August 7, 2012

General Elections: November 6, 2012

All House and Senate seats are up for election in 2012.

Redistricting completed by panel of three federal judges on June 8.

Legislature convenes the second Monday in January for a 90-day session.

Governor has a two term limit. No term limits for legislators.

Senate: 32 R, 8 D

Term 4 years

Senate President – Steve Morris (R - Hugoton), NCSL president

Minority Leader – Anthony Hensley (D - Topeka)

Major Utility Committee – Senate Utilities Committee (11 members)

Chair – Pat Apple (R - Louisburg)

House: 92 R and 33 D (represents a change of 35 members from the previous election)

Term 2 years

Speaker - Mike O'Neal (R - Hutchinson)

Minority Leader – Paul Davis (D - Lawrence)

Major Utility Committee – House Energy and Utilities Committee (19 members)

Chair – Carl Holmes (R - Liberal)

Regulatory Body: Kansas Corporation Commission

Three-person commission appointed by the Governor.

Confirmed by the Senate.

Chairman Mark Sievers appointed in May 2011. One vacancy exists as of June 18. The governor appoints the commissioners, which not more than two can be from the same political party as the governor.

Has transmission siting authority.

Major Issues

- **Senate Sub. For HB 2526** – Provides the KCC with explicit authority for the regulation of hydraulic fracturing. Imposed a 180-day time limit for the KCC to act on applications for certificates of public convenience. Broadened the definition of renewable energy resources to include energy storage connected to any renewable generation. This move allows for energy storage to be counted towards meeting the state's RES. The bill also requires the KCC to annually produce a report on the statewide retail rate impact for meeting the state's RES.
- **HB 2685** – Establishes the procedures to allow eligible water right holders to create a reservoir improvement district. The formation of such district is voluntary. This bill was the result of an interim committee's look at the declining storage capacity in Kansas reservoirs due to siltation. Any remediation would be expensive and the formation of a district would allow the water right holders to assess themselves a fee, which theoretically could be passed on to their customers. The impetus behind the bill was the deteriorating condition of John Redmond Reservoir which supplies water to the cooling lake for Wolf Creek Generating Station, a nuclear plant co-owned by Westar, KCPL and a cooperative group.
- **Sub. For HB 2470** – Removed wires or cables owned by a utility provider that has had sheathing removed, making ownership impossible, from the prohibited list of items from which a scrap dealer can purchase material.
- **Sub. For HB 2455** – Began as a bill which required every charging station (private or commercial) be separately metered and a surcharge placed on the electric usage to help pay for road transportation infrastructure. The bill received a hearing, but did not move until it was changed to just requiring the Kansas Department of Transportation to meet with stakeholders about the long-term feasibility of relying on the motor vehicle fuel tax as the primary funding methods for highways.

Additional News

Redistricting is the big news right now. The judges drew new districts and forced 12 incumbent vs. incumbent races in the House and 45 districts that had no incumbents. The Senate change was not as dramatic, but 12 House members are now challenging incumbent senators. The map fight began between the House conservatives and the Senate moderates. In the end, the court took over and drew the new maps, releasing them Friday June 8 with a filing deadline at noon the following Monday.

Westar completed a 345 kv transmission line from Rose Hill (southeast of Wichita) to the Oklahoma line in April. Construction begins soon for the Prairie Wind double circuit 345 kv line from the Oklahoma line to Medicine Lodge to Wichita. This line will connect with another line being built by ITC from Medicine

Lodge to Spearville. It will help bring wind-generated electricity to the east part of the state. Scheduled completion in 2014.

Westar has contracted with two developers to build two new wind farms totaling 369 MW. We will have a purchased power agreement for the full output when they are completed by end of 2012, at which time we will have approximately 660 MW of wind on our system. KCP&L owns two Kansas wind farms totaling nearly 150 MW with purchased power agreements for additional wind coming on-line this year. By the end of this year we will have nearly 540 MW of wind capacity serving customers in both Kansas and Missouri. Kansas has an RES of 15% by 2016 and 20% by 2020. It is based on percent of peak demand, not production.

KCP&L filed a Kansas rate case in April 2012 seeking to raise rates 12.9%. If approved, the rate increase will not be effective until January 2013.

Westar Energy filed a rate case in September 2011. Our request totaled \$90.8M. We reached a settlement for \$55M (a 3.2% increase) with staff which the commission ultimately approved in April.

Links

www.kslegislature.org (Kansas Legislature website)

www.kslegislature.org/klrd (Kansas Legislative Research Department. Good source for bill summaries, interim committees, district maps, etc.)