

Parsons Sun

What is the Kansas Policy Institute?; PUBLIC MIND

July 23, 2014

To The Sun: In a recent Public Mind piece, the Kansas Policy Institute was cited as the source for a projected increase of \$660 in annual utility costs for Kansas families due to the Renewable Energy Standards (RES) Act. It's a scary number.

What is the Kansas Policy Institute? KPI is a think tank founded in part by "supporters" of the Cato Institute. One of Cato's founders happens to be Charles Koch and David Koch sits on the board of directors.

The chairman of the KPI board has worked for the Koch family in its businesses, foundations and Cato for nearly 30 years. KPI is a member of the State Policy Network, a think tank network that receives funding from and has ties to the Koch brothers. Koch-founded and funded Americans for Prosperity Foundation is an associate member of the network.

In regard to renewable energy, "data" from the Kansas Policy Institute is about as far from being unbiased as you can get. KPI is, in essence, a lobbying arm. Here, one objective is to protect Koch Industries interests in oil, gas and coal.

Take a look for yourself at what the renewable energy industry is doing in Kansas. The Kansas Department of Commerce website has an informative page on the progress of alternative energy in the state. Studies by The Kansas Corporation Commission (the public utilities commission of the state of Kansas) are just one source that say the impact to utility rates due to the RES Act is zero to negligible. Additionally, the act has cost-containment mechanisms written into it that protect both the consumer and the utilities.

The 2009 RES Act passed the Kansas Senate 37-2 and passed the House with a final vote of 103-18. Yea votes included then Rep. Jeff King. This was not a partisan bill. Unfortunately, it has been turned into an issue driven by money and powerful special interest groups that like scary numbers.

- GLENN FOSS, Parsons